2015

Organizational Leaders' Experience with Fear-Related Emotions: A Critical Incident Study

Al Barkouli
Antioch University - PhD Program in Leadership and Change

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS' EXPERIENCE WITH

FEAR-RELATED EMOTIONS: A CRITICAL INCIDENT STUDY

AL BARKOULI

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program
of Antioch University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

May, 2015

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled:

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERS' EXPERIENCE WITH FEAR-RELATED EMOTIONS:
A CRITICAL INCIDENT STUDY

prepared by

Al Barkouli

is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Leadership and Change.

Approved by:

Alan Guskin, Ph.D., Chair date

Jon Wergin, Ph.D., Committee Member date

Philomena Essed, Ph.D., Committee Member date

Michael Bassis, Ph.D., External Reader date

Acknowledgements

There are so many people I would like to thank for helping me through this rich journey of learning and growth and for reaching this milestone. First and foremost, I would like to thank my father for getting it all started and inspiring me to begin this journey more than four years ago when there were so many good reasons not to take this on with everything else in my life. Your last words are still with me every day. I wish you were still here so we could celebrate this together. I want to express my sincere gratitude to Al Guskin, my advisor and Chair, for his friendship, support, guidance and wisdom throughout this journey. It was a blessing to have Al as my Chair who has helped me bridge the gap between theory and practice because of his many years of experience in both worlds. I appreciate the support and guidance from my committee members; Philomena Essed, who helped me focus on leaders' fears as the research topic and was there when I needed help; Jon Wergin, who was my methodology mentor and shared a pragmatic perspective of life with me. Also thank you to Michael Bassis, the external reader. I want to also express my deep gratitude to Marty Linsky who was my external mentor and who helped me better understand Heifetz and his work on adaptive leadership. To all the faculty and staff at Antioch University: thank you, you are first class professionals. I am so grateful to everyone in Cohort 11 who made this journey so much more enjoyable through the authentic relationships and rich dialogue over the three years we were together. You are friends for life. I already miss every one of you. A special thank you to my company, David Evans and Associates (DEA), for supporting me with time, resources, and encouragement—especially Suzie Willard who edited my drafts and much more and Sanjana Kapur for all the graphic support. I also want to thank the fifteen brave executives who agreed to talk to me about this very sensitive topic. Finally, I am forever thankful and indebted to my family for their support and patience over almost four years.

Nagat, my wife, and my kids; Sara, Adam, Sabrina, Lina, Omar and Salma, I could not have done this without your many sacrifices. You are the biggest reason for every breath I take. I love you.

Dedication

To the special person and great human being who inspired me to go on this journey. To my father, Abobaker Al-Barkouli, I hope you are looking down and smiling from heaven. God bless you, Dad.

Abstract

This study used the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to better understand how organizational leaders experienced fear-related emotions. Through semi-structured interviews, fifteen executive leaders, mainly chief executive officers (CEOs), shared their experiences in response to threatening, risky, or dangerous incidents. In addition to a phenomenological understanding of the experience, participants illuminated the role that fear-related emotions play in leader decisions, how these emotions influence leader-follower relationships, the impacts of fear-related emotions on leaders' health and well-being, and the ways leaders managed their experience with fear-related emotions including the role courage played. Leaders often faced threats, risks, or dangers (stimuli) from within the organization itself and from the external organizational environment. The fear of not-knowing enough or not being good enough (self-doubt) and the fear of loss that often accompanies change were experienced the most by these leaders. The participants decided between a fear-focused (maladaptive) strategy and an incident-focused (adaptive) strategy when they were susceptible to a threatening, risky or dangerous stimulus. Leader efficacy was the key to a leader's choice, where strong leader efficacy resulted in adaptive decisions and weak leader efficacy resulted in maladaptive ones. In the follower-leader relationship, the participants often suppressed their fear-related emotions by using surface or deep acting, which at times affected leader authenticity and trust. Leaders experienced serious to mild health and well-being effects as a result of the emotional experience, while leaders who used suppression techniques experienced more serious health impacts. Supportive relationships, practicing mindfulness, and a leader's personal courage, including the courage to be emotionally vulnerable, played an important role in how leaders managed fear-related emotions. This study has important implications to both leaders and leadership. Using complexity leadership framework, this study provides a better understanding of the risks, dangers and threats within the leadership context and how fear-related emotions can influence leaders and the leadership process including decision making, relationships with followers and the health and well-being of leaders. This study also highlights the important role leader efficacy plays especially when dealing with complex adaptive challenges. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA http://aura.antioch.edu/ and OhioLink ETD Center https://etd.ohiolink.edu/etd

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

For the past 25 years I have had the privilege of being in formal leadership and/or managerial roles. Since 2010, I have been the chief executive officer of a 900-person consulting engineering firm. Like most people who experience fear-related emotions, I seldom stopped to recognize and acknowledge my fear-related emotions. On the contrary, I often heard a little voice inside my head telling me to not show any emotion, especially fear-related emotions. I learned early on in my upbringing by watching my father, who seldom showed any emotion, that emotional vulnerability was a sign of weakness, especially for leaders. This is consistent with most global cultural display rules when it comes to the display of emotions; specifically negative ones (Matsumoto, 1989). Most cultures frown on leaders who show fear-related emotions. For example, here in the United States of America, leaders who experience and display positive emotions are generally preferred and thought to be more effective as leaders than those who are prone to experience negative emotions (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Rubin, Munz, & Bommer, 2005; Staw & Barsade, 1993).

My view of emotions and emotional displays began to shift when I was exposed to the concept of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) as part of a leadership development program my employer sent me to in 2004. Coming out of the program, I began to recognize the critical role emotions play in leadership and began to experiment with showing my own vulnerabilities to the people who worked with and reported to me. In spite of this new awareness, I was still uncomfortable with displaying fear-related emotions. I feared the perception of being a weak leader and also feared what the display of my own fear-related emotion might do to my constituents' attitudes and their emotions.

My curiosity about the relationship between fear-related emotions and leadership was ignited in Keene, New Hampshire, as a result of one of the lectures in this PhD program. The questions I was grappling with then was: why is it that very few people think of themselves as leaders? Or do not choose to practice leadership when there are so many challenges and opportunities that require leadership on many levels? To what extent do the risks and threats of leading and the fear-related emotions that result from these risks get in the way of people taking on leadership? From my experience, there are so many organizational and community-based challenges that require leadership on many different levels. Yet communities and organizations continue to hold out hope for hero leaders to swoop in and address these challenges.

Working with my advisor and professors, I learned that I cannot make my doctoral thesis my life's work. I needed to narrow down and focus the research question for this study. This has led me to focus on understanding formal leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions and how some find the courage to lead in the face of their fears. My hope is that the findings from this research can be used to understand the role fear-related emotions play in people not taking on leadership roles.

Over the past couple of years, and as a result of my research interests, I have begun to notice, listen to, and reflect on how I, and other formal leaders, talk about or do not talk about their fear-related emotions—even when it is relatively obvious that fear is present. There are many incidents or situations in which fear-related emotions are experienced by leaders. Some of these are major incidents while others are just everyday situations and show that fear-related emotions can be the result of daily and routine work hassles. Here are just three examples:

- At a recent CEO conference in New York that I attended along with over 200 other CEOs, there were several expert panels made up of different CEOs. One of these panels was made up of large company CEOs (companies with $1 billion plus of revenue). One of the CEO was sharing his emotional experience when he was first named CEO. He mentioned that the day he was named CEO his family took him out to dinner to celebrate his promotion. When he came home from the celebration and went to bed, his dog came to his bedroom and was quietly lying down next to him. The CEO shared with the conference attendees that his dog unlike his family and friends was the only one who could smell the fear in the CEO. When the CEO took over his new position, the economy was very slow and he was afraid that he might not be able to perform adequately in his new role.

- Another leader has recently shared with me her fear for her life when she was leading a health care team during the recent breakout of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). She recalled when SARS initially was discovered, there was not much known about it other than its potentially deadly nature. She recalled being scared to death herself and yet feeling the need to lead her team in helping sick patients in the face of the risky and threatening situation.
- The CEO of a company which is being acquired by another larger company held a dozen meetings or more, sent more than one hundred emails, and sent 20 different versions of a non-binding letter of intent to the buyer. When I asked him why it was taking him so long to get the deal done, particularly when it is a non-binding agreement, he said that he was afraid of making the wrong decision.

As mentioned above, I have also begun to notice and become more aware of my own fears as a result of my research on fear. Below are three brief examples of my own fears:

- A major project for which my company was the lead consultant recently lost its funding. My company had to deal with the impact of losing a significant percentage of our revenue. While we knew that funding the project was not certain, the loss was still significant which created uncertainty and risk for the firm and its employees. I felt a sense of apprehension for months as a result of this situation.
- I was recently asked by our board of directors to take on the chairmanship role. Besides the apprehension of taking on a new role, I was replacing someone who was my mentor and friend. I had a fear of hurting his feelings and betraying my loyalty to our friendship.
- I had to make a decision related to the acquisition of a company that was about 10% the size of our company. The founder of our firm, who is also on the board of directors, was against the acquisition while the company leadership team was in favor of the acquisition. I had to make the final decision. I remember experiencing a fear of failure and asking myself “what if the founder is right?”

These are just three day-to-day real life examples of my own fears and the fears of other leaders. If these incidents happened three years ago, I would most likely have felt the same fears and apprehensions. However, I most likely would not have been consciously aware of these feelings. I suspect that there are many people who are practicing leadership and yet are not consciously aware of their emotions, especially fear-related emotions (Hampton, 2013). I hope a study like this one will further raise leaders’ awareness of their fear-related emotions. My research quest regarding fear-related emotions and leadership will most likely extend beyond this doctoral dissertation. There is no question I have a personal passion for the topic and its implications for the practice of leadership.

Purpose Statement

The role of emotion in leadership and organizational life has recently garnered more attention from researchers around the globe (e.g., Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Zerbe, 2000; Fineman, 2000; Payne & Cooper, 2003). At the same time, studies regarding the role of discrete emotions (such as fear-related emotions) in leadership within organizations have lagged behind (Gooty, Gavin, & Ashkanasy, 2009). The purpose of this study was to better understand organizational leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. I used the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) to interview executives, mainly chief executive officers (CEOs), of different organizations to better understanding leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions with specific focus on the influence of fear-related emotions on leaders' relationships with followers, decision-making, and the effect of fear- related emotions on leaders' well-being. I also studied the relationship between fear and courage and the role courage plays in overcoming fear.

In this introductory chapter, I first discuss why organizational leaders' experience with fear-related emotions is important to both the theory and practice of leadership, present a brief overview of leadership and emotion literature, outline the scope of this research and ethical considerations, identify the research questions and research design, and provide summaries of the remaining chapters.

Problem Statement

Context plays a crucial role in leadership and its effectiveness (Hannah, Uhl-Bien, Avolio, & Cavarretta, 2009; Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002; Porter & McLaughlin, 2006) and organizations today exist in a context that seems to be so peculiarly insecure, uncertain, and chaotic. Global societies are experiencing extraordinary social, environmental, informational, economic, and technological changes. According to Beck (2009), "we are becoming a global community of threats" (p. 8). For example, the current economic crisis around the globe has affected all organizations and created a feeling of insecurity and instability within workplaces. This complex context raises a number of adaptive challenges and calls on organizations, their members, and leaders to innovate, adapt, and to find new ways of doing business. In the face of these challenges, the survival of organizations and therefore the security of their members are sometimes threatened. As a result, fear-related emotions (which are normal human reaction to a threat) can run high within organizations and are likely to affect both members and leaders alike.

In addition to threats generated by the external and internal context, there are inherent risks in the exercise of leadership itself. Often people who choose to lead must take on the task of mobilizing followers to face important challenges. These include challenging dysfunctional cultural norms and values, which could entail facing difficult realities that followers may not want to face (Heifetz, 1994). Bringing followers face-to-face with unpleasant realities is one root of resistance to change and also necessary for leadership success. At the same time adaptive challenges require leaders and followers to accept the notion that leadership is improvisational and experimental and therefore subject to the risk of failure. This among other reasons makes leadership a risky endeavor. This was well stated by Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009):

> Exercising adaptive leadership is dangerous. The word *leader* comes from the Indo-European root word *leit,* name for the person who carried the flag in front of an army going into battle and usually died in the first enemy attack. His sacrifices would alert the rest of the army to the location of the danger ahead. (p. 26)

This inherently means that leaders and their followers have to expose themselves to risk—such as the risk of failure. Fear of failure, fear of losing control, and fear of not being liked are just a few examples of the common emotional responses to threats. To lead is to face risk and danger, requiring both the skill and the will from leaders to be effective (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

In recent years, practitioners and scholars are beginning to recognize the key role that emotions and their affect play in the work place. For example, Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) wrote, "emotions are an integral and inseparable part of everyday organizational life. From moments of frustration or joy, grief or fear, to an enduring sense of dissatisfaction or commitment, the experience of work is saturated with feelings" (p. 98). At the same time, there are scant studies and research on the role of discrete emotions, such as fear and fear-related emotions, in the workplace (Gooty et al., 2009). More specifically, very little research addresses how leaders experience fear-related emotions in the work place. Perhaps contributing to the lack of research is the unwritten rule in most organizations today that expressing negative emotions, such as fear, is not welcomed and considered unprofessional.

Leaders and employees are expected to show a pleasant and neutral demeanor regardless of the situation. They are expected to mask negative emotions and fake positive ones (Kramer & Hess, 2002). Furthermore, organizational settings discourage the display of emotions in general (Kramer & Hess, 2002). It seems that rational thinking is encouraged while emotional display is discouraged (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Ashkanasy & Rush, 2004).

Leaders who are self-aware and manage emotions appropriately in the workplace are arguably more effective (George, 2000; Goleman, 1998; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Leaders can use positive emotions to motivate followers and to communicate their vision (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). Fear appeal can also be used as a persuasion technique (Dillard & Anderson, 2004). Yet little is known about the leader's own fear experiences and how leaders cultivate courage to manage their own fears.

Leaders are human beings and like any human being they experience a range of emotions as they are leading. Yet leaders are expected to be tough, resilient, and heroic. But, at the same time, good leaders are also expected to be real and authentic which require them to be vulnerable and share their emotions with their followers.

Both practitioners and scholars need to learn more about fear-related emotions and how leaders express these emotions in constructive and less constructive ways. Leaders cannot just ignore and numb fear or deny that it exists for numbing fear or negative emotions can rob leaders of the joy that comes with leading or with living. According to Brown (2010) leaders and human beings cannot have it both ways. Speaking at a TED Talk in June, 2010, Brené Brown stated:

> The problem is — and I learned this from the research — that you cannot selectively numb emotion. You can't say, 'here's the bad stuff. Here's vulnerability, here's grief, here's shame, here's fear, here's disappointment. I don't want to feel these. I'm going to have a couple of beers and a banana nut muffin. (laughter) I don't want to feel these. And I know that's knowing' (laughter). I hack into your lives for a living. God, (laughter) you can't numb those hard feelings without numbing the other affects, our emotions. You cannot selectively numb. So when we numb those, we numb joy, we numb gratitude, we numb happiness. And then we are miserable, and we are looking for purpose and meaning, and then we feel vulnerable, so then we have a couple of beers and a banana nut muffin. And it becomes this dangerous cycle.

One construct that has recently emerged in the study of emotions and leadership is emotional labor or the way people regulate and display emotions at work. Research has shown that leaders use two different strategies to regulate their emotions at work (Grandey, 2003; Hochschild, 1983): They use deep acting or reappraisal which refers to modification of a person's emotional state such as empathizing with employees, or use surface acting or suppression of negative emotions which refers to modifying leaders' outward emotional display. One example is how leaders manage their own emotions and the emotions of their followers in the face of external and internal challenges. In challenging times, followers look to their leaders to show confidence and courage in the face of threats. However, leaders are human and can feel threatened and afraid too. Leaders are likely to use emotional labor or emotional regulation strategies to manage their own emotions in order to express the right emotions as defined by cultural norms and emotional display rules.

Emotional labor has been shown to impact leaders' well-being and may cause emotional exhaustion or burnout and depression as well as other negative impacts to the leader's overall health (Abraham, 1998; Bono & Vey, 2005; Grandey, 2003; Kim, 2008; Schaubroeck & Jones, 2000). At the same time surface acting in particular was found to generate emotional dissonance and felt inauthentic (Erickson & Wharton, 1997; Hochschild, 1983). Since authenticity and resonance are critical to a leader's ability to influence followers and create a trust based relationship, such a strategy can undermine the leader's effectiveness.

Brief Review of Leadership and Emotions Literature

There are several theoretical and conceptual models that offer a very important foundation for this study. The second chapter has an in-depth review of the foundational framework for this study. In this section, I briefly review a few of the leadership and emotional models that are relevant to the research questions.

Leadership. Leadership is such an elusive term or concept and is often very difficult to define. According to Northouse (2010), there are as many as 65 different classification systems that are used to define the dimensions of leadership. The result is wide views of the leadership phenomenon: leadership as a process; as a personality or series of traits; as a behavior or activity; as a power or authority relationship; and finally others see it from a skills perspective (Northouse, 2010). For the purpose of this study, I used Complexity Leadership Theory since it builds on prior leadership models and honors these different leadership perspectives by building on their strengths and avoiding their weaknesses. Complexity Leadership Theory also acknowledges the uncertainty and ambiguity of the context, which are sources of risk and threats that can generate fear-related emotions.

Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) postulate that one of the biggest weaknesses of the existing leadership models is that they are based on the industrial age and on a top-down mindset, which makes most of them outdated and ineffective in the current knowledge economy. Uhl-Bien et al. used complexity sciences and complex adaptive systems to develop a framework for the study of Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT). The CLT framework has three leadership roles: administrative leadership, enabling leadership and adaptive leadership.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) suggest that administrative leadership is “leadership grounded in traditional, bureaucratic notions of hierarchy, alignment, and control” (p. 299). Enabling leadership is “leadership that structures and enables conditions such that complex adaptive systems are able to optimally address creative problem solving, adaptability, and learning” (p. 299). Adaptive leadership is “leadership as a generative dynamic that underlines emergent change activities” (p. 299).

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) draw heavily from the work of Heifetz (1994) on adaptive leadership and like Heifetz, the authors draw a distinction between leadership and leaders. Unlike most leadership theories that primarily focus on leaders, in CLT leadership is viewed as an activity or a process that is emergent, dynamic, and produces adaptive outcomes. Alternatively, leaders are viewed as any individual who chooses to practice leadership in order to mobilize or influence these dynamic adaptive outcomes (Heifetz, 1994; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Also similar to Heifetz (1994), CLT makes an important distinction between formal authority or managerial positions and leadership. Formal authority positions that coordinate and structure organizations are referred to as administrative leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Another important distinction that Uhl-Bien et al. assert and borrow from Heifetz and Heifetz and Linsky (2002) is that complexity leadership happens in the face of adaptive challenges where new learning, innovation, and experimentation, as well as new patterns of behavior are required. This is in contrast to technical or routine challenges where existing knowhow can be applied to deal with these types of challenges, even complicated ones.

Emotions and complexity. Emotions serve as an important motivational system for all complex adaptive and living systems. Researchers such as Izard (1977) and Plutchik (1991) argue that emotions are key especially when these events have major influences on satisfying human needs and the achievement of their goals. Emotions can have major influence on the decisions that human beings make. For example, Frijda (1994) suggests that negative emotions such as fear can result from threatening or risky events and can motivate actions to ensure a person's survival or to prevent the unpleasant from occurring. Fear can also be maladaptive and promote emotion or mood regulation instead of dealing with challenges. In effect, emotions such as fear play a key role in promoting or inhibiting learning, effective decision-making, determining how leaders think and behave, and ultimately play a key role in the physical and psychological survival of leaders and their constituents.

For a similar or exact threat, one person's response can be adaptive while another can be maladaptive. According to the Extended Parallel Process Model (EPPM), the determining variables are self-efficacy (a person's belief in their ability to implement an effective response) and response efficacy (the effectiveness of a potential response or strategy in dealing with the threat) (Witte, 1994). Witte shows in the EPPM that when a threatening situation exceeds an individual's ability to cope with the threat, the threat can evoke fear and negative emotions. When this happens, the individual's immediate reaction is to control their emotions, including fear, rather than dealing with the threat. Some examples of emotional control include individuals engaged in work avoidance techniques such as procrastination, not wanting to change, or any other counter-productive behaviors. In essence, people escape negative emotions by trying to escape uncertainty, which cannot be avoided in the case of complexity. In complex systems that are characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability, non-linearity, and an inability to control events, leader decisions and interventions require action to be taken often in the face of risks when the probability of success or failure cannot be determined in advance (Fields, 2011). In essence response efficacy, the effectiveness of the response or intervention, cannot be known in advance. At the same time, most people, when given a choice between certain and uncertain responses tend to avoid the uncertain ones (Ellsberg, 1961). Hence, in the face of conditions of complexity where threat is likely to feel high due to the higher risk, most people's self-efficacy (the belief in their ability to implement a response to the threat) and response efficacy are very likely to be lower. This is a situation ripe for highly emotional reactions (Witte, 1994). On the other hand, in non-complex systems or situations, the threat is likely to be lower due to a higher degree of predictability and control. Even when threats are high in such situations, because of the high predictability and control the people in the system are likely to have experienced a similar threat in the past and therefore already have the know-how and experience to deal with the threat. Therefore, on a comparative basis, people's self-efficacy and response efficacy are likely to be higher in non-complex systems or situations.

When an organization and its employees focus exclusively on emotion regulation, this can undermine its volitional skills related to the challenges it faces. Instead of using volitional skills to adapt and self-regulate behavior and deal with challenges, perhaps mustering collective creativity to make a plan of action, the organization and its members instead self-regulate emotions. In essence, the mood of people takes precedence, and the organization pays the cost in terms of not adapting to the complexity or threat. This can be a vicious cycle that organizations and its people can get stuck within. Neglecting to deal with challenges and engaging in emotional control can result in frustration and negative emotions, which then result in the challenges not being addressed and the cycle continues.

In a complex system, when leaders interact with followers, it is important for leaders to give cues to their followers and share feelings with them to help manage followers' emotions. This is critical in complex systems characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability, non-linearity and inability to control events as emotional reactions are likely to be high and must be managed so that followers and the system itself can make progress on the challenges they face. These cues might involve emotional expression through body language such as various facial expressions connected with the particular emotions leaders are experiencing. In other cases, it might involve directly stating how leaders are feeling. When leaders tell followers that they are feeling joyful, sad, excited, or frightened, they are giving the followers important information that can then be used to take action. Followers can then respond to leaders' attempts to mobilize them to take action and face a particular challenge or situation.

Just as leaders' emotions provide valuable information to others, the emotional expressions of the followers gives leaders a wealth of social information about the system. Social communication is an important part of daily organizational life. Being able to interpret and react to the emotions of others is essential to leadership, especially when dealing with complex systems. It allows both leaders and followers to respond appropriately to challenges or opportunities and build deeper, more meaningful relationships with one another. While complexity theory may not specifically address the emotional dimension of leadership

(Morrison, 2010), it is clear to see the adaptive value of both leaders' and followers' communication of their emotions. Fear specifically can be seen as one form of adaptation to the threatening and unpredictable nature of our complex world. For example, Öhman (2008) asserts that fear is a functional emotion with evolutionary roots that helped humans stay alive in the face threats. Öhman (2008) states that "viewed from the evolutionary perspective, fear is central to mammalian evolution" (p. 710). Leaders' and/or followers' fears can also be unhealthy and promote a freeze response or a maladaptive reaction.

The Perils and Risks of Complexity Leadership

With complex adaptive challenges comes a high degree of risk, uncertainty, and surprise. However, most people in organizations view risk, uncertainty, and surprise as unwelcome and generally not well-tolerated occurrences. Most often people attempt to avoid these outcomes or try hard to control them. A common strategy when these situations occur and the stakes are high is for people to look to their leader, especially one who holds a position of authority, to come to their rescue. Leaders, especially ones in positions of authority, often welcome this dependency as it helps them feel needed and wanted. Often times the chief executive officer (CEO) and possibly a select few on the leadership team meet behind closed doors to deal with complex and adaptive problems. Once a solution is devised, it is often communicated to the organization and implemented.

Unfortunately, most leaders fail to distinguish between such usual and routine problems that can be solved on behalf of their organization and the complex ones that require the whole system to solve. In the face of complex adaptive challenges, solutions based on usual and routine problems fail to address the problem(s) because to do so requires adaptive leadership where the problems and solutions are not fully understood or known and require learning, experimentations and changes by all stakeholders including leaders and followers (Heifetz, 1994). According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002), “when people look to authorities for easy answers to adaptive challenges, they end with dysfunction” (p. 14). In fact, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) argue that there is a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change, “the deeper the change and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be and, thus, the greater the risk to those who lead” (p. 14).

When people are facing complex adaptive challenges, they often look to authority figures (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) or to people in administrative leadership roles (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) for answers and solutions, for direction, protection, and order. Uhl-Bien et al. refer to administrative leadership as top-down activities by people in formal management roles. These activities may include planning and coordination of organizational activities such as structure tasks, planning, creating vision, acquiring resources, managing crises and conflicts, and dealing with organizational strategy.

In the face of complex adaptive challenges, leaders must practice enabled adaptive leadership at many levels of the system and mobilize adaptive work. According to complexity leadership, adaptive leadership is not an act of an individual, but rather a dynamic of interdependent agents (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). In essence, similar to Heifetz (1994) and Heifetz and Linsky (2002), the organization experiencing the problem has to do the adaptive work as a whole. Both the problem and its solution reside with the organization and its people and not strictly with individuals in positions of authority. Adaptive leadership has to take place on multiple levels within the system and is not necessarily tied to formal positions of authority.

In most complex systems or adaptive work, a certain tension is present. Effective leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007) attempts to keep tension in the system at productive levels. At times, the tension level in the system needs to be raised when it is too low for the adaptive work that is required. At other times, it needs to be lowered when the tension is too high and not at productive levels. Leadership needs to manage the tension or sometimes manage the confusion between administrative and adaptive leadership functions. On the one hand, administrative leadership relies on authority figures providing ordered or autocratic responses to problems and therefore impairs emergent or adaptive responses by taking control of the situation away from the stakeholders or followers. On the other hand adaptive leadership challenges the followers and gives them (and the leaders) the freedom to take risks and therefore encourages emergent responses by all stakeholders. Real life challenges or problems have both administrative and adaptive challenges bundled within them and leaders need to know when to use an ordered or administrative response and when to use an emergent or adaptive response.

Practicing complexity leadership can be very risky for individuals who choose to tackle complex adaptive challenges. Risks arise from both the uncertainty in the environment and the resistance of the system to the adaptive and complex challenges. People within organizations expect their authority figures, whether they are managers or elected officials, to provide ready, accurate, simple solutions to their problems and challenges rather than being engaging themselves in the solution process. Instead of engaging in adaptive challenges by learning, experimenting, innovating, and making tough choices people often resist and blame authority for their problems. According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002), people who choose to exercise leadership risk being marginalized, diverted, attacked, or seduced. When an organization or system marginalizes, diverts, attacks or seduces people who choose to practice adaptive leadership, the organization or system and its people temporarily reduce the tension that results from pushing the organization or system to the edge of chaos or to a state of disequilibrium.

While it might be temporarily effective at reducing tension, in the long run, this avoidance strategy is ineffective at dealing with the adaptive challenge and therefore increases the risk to both the leader and to the system or organization.

At the individual level, leaders (like most people) are susceptible to certain types of fears. For example, some personalities fear losing control. Others fear being wrong, fear not being liked, fear losing connection, or fear being harmed or controlled—among others (Riso & Hudson, 1996). In complexity leadership, these fears are often invoked by the nature of the challenge being faced. First, the uncertainty and unpredictability associated with complexity can invoke high anxiety levels in the system and may result in leader fear and anxiety. Second, the nature of enabling and adaptive leadership creates high levels of tension within the system and people tend to push back on individuals exercising leadership as if they were the cause of all the problems. This may invoke the leaders' fear of not being liked or a fear of being unworthy. Additionally, given the improvisations and experimentation required in solving adaptive challenges, leaders' fear of being wrong is likely to be invoked.

Exercising complexity and adaptive leadership requires both the will and skill to stay alive. In these times of chaos and uncertainty, many organizations and communities are searching for heroic leadership. They are searching for someone who is in control when the nature of complex adaptive systems is inherently uncontrollable. To overcome their inner fears such as the fear of being wrong, of losing control, or of not being liked, many leaders are motivated to be that hero. Yet for complex systems to function better and face adaptive challenges, they need the system participants to be part of the solution and to be contributors to both understanding the problem and to solving it (Heifetz, 1994).

Li, Ashkanasy, and Ahlstrom (2010) propose the bifurcation model of affect structure (BMAS) based on complexity theory. The BMAS explores how emotion as an adaptive complex system reacts to affective events. Li et al. proposed three states: equilibrium state; discrete positive and negative emotion in the near equilibrium state; and chaotic emotion state. In the chaotic state, individuals experience intense and uncomfortable emotions. According to Li et al. "individuals in this state perceive threats, uncertainty and ambiguity. The semantic cluster associated with this state includes anxiety and fear, together with an experience of being scared and upset" (2010, p. 155). This seems to support the notion that as we move from administrative to enabling to adaptive leadership, the risks increase and so do fear-related emotions.

Fear Emotion

Despite disagreement in psychology about the definition of emotion (e.g., Eisenberg, 2000; Izard, 1993; Lazarus, 1991) and which emotions are basic, there is wide agreement that fear is one of the basic human emotions (Ekman, 1992; Izard, 1992; Öhman, 1986). According to Izard (1991), "despite the varying opinion of scientists, virtually all people in keeping with the discrete emotions approach, readily admit that they experience joy, sadness, anger and fear and that they know the differences among these emotions in how they feel and how they affect them" (p. 3). Fear is a natural part of life and being alive. Fear is a very powerful emotion that affects multiple dimensions of human life. For example, the recent terrorist bombing in April 2013 at the Boston Marathon generated fear and terror not only in the marathon runners and the innocent people cheering them on, but also in the citizens, political leaders of Boston, and the whole country. This event and other world events, such as the terrorist attacks of 9/11 randomly striking innocent people, reminds us that threats and fear are an inevitable part of life. Today people have to contend not only with the threat of terrorism, but also with other threatening events such as worldwide conflicts, unstable global economies, crime, social unrest, global warming, the spread of infectious diseases, and so on. This highlights how threatening events and the resultant fears are very pervasive and will continue to shape human life in the future.

Organizations and organizational leadership are, to a large extent, shaped and influenced by the external context in which they exist. Hence, the fear generated by these external threats often spills over into organizational life affecting how employees feel and how organizational leadership is exercised. In addition to the contextual fear in the external environment, fear can also be part of the internal context of work life. For example, organizations may need to change and adapt to both internal and external challenges. Adaptation often requires discarding some of the old ways of conducting business that have become ingrained or become part of the identity of a given organization and requires learning new ways. Mobilizing people to change old habits and learn new ones is often threatening and generates anxiety and fear in both the leader and their followers.

Other sources of fear can be psychological in nature. According to Riso and Hudson (1999), different types of personalities have different basic fears. For example, dependent on personality type, some people fear being worthless or not having inherent value, while other people might fear the loss of connections. Yet others might fear being harmed or controlled by others. Human beings tend to compensate for their basic fears and defend themselves against these issues through basic desires or motives (Riso & Hudson, 1999). These basic desires speak to universal human needs. Some may have a basic desire to find security in order to overcome their fear, while others may have the basic desire to dominate and control their environment in order to overcome their fear of being controlled or harmed. Like any person, these basic fears and desires are an inherent part of leaders' personality. For example, some leaders fear not being liked by others. In this situation, they tend to be motivated by their desire to be liked so they can protect themselves against this feeling of fear. Other leaders may have a hunger for being needed. They tend to pander to their constituents to fulfill their hunger or to overcome their fear. Unlike fears that are driven by external stimulus, these fears are driven more by the human ego agenda and may be hidden from a leader's conscious awareness.

Research Questions

The central research question for this study was: *How do organizational leaders experience fear-related emotions?*

The focus of this research question was on the type of incidents or situations that give rise to fear-related emotions and how leaders manage these threats, incidents and situations. Do they choose to do nothing about the threat and focus mainly on managing their fear-related emotions or neglect to deal with the threat or situation itself? Do they choose to adapt to the situation or threat in the face of feeling afraid? Is there another course of action available to them? Why do they make whichever choice?

There are several sub-questions or sub-themes that were also explored to help better understand the relationship between fear-related emotions and leadership.

First, how do leaders deal with or manage their fear-related emotions? Is there a role for courage in managing leaders' fear-related emotions? This question was designed to explore management strategies and to explore whether leaders invoke courage in the face of threatening or fearful situations.

Second, what is the influence of fear-related emotions on leader decision-making? Here I wanted to understand the impact of fear-related emotions on the ability of leaders to make decisions, specifically what type of decisions they make and why.

Third, how do fear-related emotions affect leaders' relationships with followers? With this question, the focus was on the impact of fear-related emotions on leader relationships with their followers and to what extent do leaders show or share their fear-related emotions with followers. In essence what level of emotional authenticity or vulnerability is experienced in the context of the relationship?

Fourth, how do fear-related emotions impact leaders' health and well-being? It would seem that when leaders experience fear-related emotions they are likely to experience significant or at least some stress. The question was designed to better understand how fear-related emotions might impact the well-being of leaders given the potential for very stressful emotional states.

Research Design

Based on the above research questions and to better understand leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, the most appropriate and fitting research technique to use for this study was the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). One of the CIT strengths is its ability to capture both emotional and behavioral experiences. According to Flanagan (1954), who introduced the technique, CIT is a procedure for collecting or gathering important facts about behavior in defined situations. The CIT is a flexible set of principles that need to be adapted to meet the specific research situation at hand. I used this qualitative method to gather in-depth interviews and accounts of leaders' interpretations of certain incidents or situations when they experienced fear-related emotions.

Fifteen executive leaders, mainly chief executive officers of different organizations, were recruited and interviewed for this study. The saturation point, or the point in which no new themes emerged, determined the final number of interviews. Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for data analysis. A detailed description of the research methodology is presented in third chapter of this dissertation.

Scope, Limitations, and Ethical Considerations

Qualitative research methods, much like any other research method, have some limitations. The context and specifics of each research case have significant influence on qualitative research findings (Patton, 2005). This study was conducted in organizational contexts and with senior executives, mainly CEOs, of 15 organizations. This may limit the generalization of findings from this study to a broader leader population. For example, in a different context such as informal leaders or different types of organizational settings, the findings of this study may not apply. Another limitation specific to leadership studies is “the study of leadership is highly prone to presentational data (Dasborough, 2006, p. 176).” Leaders may want to enhance their image through impression management and therefore may tell a better or more positive story about their experience with fear-related emotions (Dasborough, 2006).

The sample size of 15 individuals, like most qualitative inquiries, was relatively small. Gathering phenomenological data requires a purposeful sampling approach. The selection of leaders to be interviewed was critical. According to Dasborough (2006), “one must undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they have ‘lived experience’ as oppose to secondhand experience” (p.104). Saturation of research content and information determined the exact number of interviewees, which is typical to the determination of sample size in qualitative research (Crabtree & Miller, 1999).

Both qualitative and quantitative research must take into account ethical considerations relative to the method, sample selection, researcher, collection and interpretation of data as well as reporting of findings. Specifically, the role of the researcher as the instrument in qualitative study is very important and may introduce limitations. This requires that researcher biases, values and judgment be stated explicitly in the research report (Creswell, 1994). My experience as the chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of a mid-size organization in the consulting engineering field may potentially have introduced bias and therefore limitations into this study. The interviewees had differing degrees of relationship with me, which may have inadvertently influenced the data provided during the interviews. The third chapter of this study addresses how I was able to set aside or address instances of researcher bias and influence.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a general introduction to this study. The purpose of the research was to better understand leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. Specifically, the aim of the research was to better understand how leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions and courage affect their relationships with followers, their decision-making ability, and their well-being.

The second chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to the study topics and presents the major findings and corresponding themes. Specifically, the chapter reviews relevant leadership literature and theories, literature on emotions and emotion theories with a focus on fear-related emotions. Literature addressing the role of fear-related emotions, where available, or emotions in general on decision-making, relationships, and well-being are briefly explored. Additionally, the literature review includes a review of courage and how it is related to leaders and to fear-related emotions.

The third chapter briefly describes the qualitative research method and its use in leadership studies and then specifically focuses on the critical incident technique and its congruence with the leaders' experiences of fear-related emotions. This chapter also addresses how the CIT was used specifically in this study including strengths and limitations, research pilot, and the interview protocol. Additionally the selection of research participants, collection of data and assessment of findings are described. The chapter concludes with a discussion of reliability and validity as well as the procedures to enhance study trustworthiness.

The fourth chapter presents the study data and critical incidents as shared by the participants and as analyzed for thematic presentation of key study findings along the research questions.

The fifth chapter presents a detailed summary of key findings and support for these findings from prior research along the research questions and themes. This chapter also identifies the important implications of this study to the theory and practice of leadership and change as well as to future research inquiries on leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions.

Literature Review

To examine and understand organizational leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, six key areas of literature were reviewed. The first section focused on understanding fear-related emotions from psychological and biological perspectives. Although this first section was not intended to be an exhaustive review, it provided an understanding and working definition of fear-related emotions as well as the logic behind treating fear, anxiety and worry as a cluster of fear-related emotions in this study. The second section provided the conceptual framework for this study and outlined relevant theories and models for the study of fear-related emotions. The third section highlighted the sources of leaders' fear-related emotions within the organizational and leadership context. The fourth section reviewed prior research on the experience of fear-related emotions within the leader, the variation of fear-related emotions between leaders, and how fear-related emotions influence the interaction between leaders and followers. This review focused on the study's questions relating to leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, the impact of these emotions on decision-making and on relationships with followers. The fifth section focused on research regarding the impact of stress generated by fear-related emotion on leaders' well-being. The final section reviewed how courage relates to leadership and to fear-related emotions. This chapter concluded with a focus on the existing gaps in research and where this study will add to the body of existing knowledge.

Fear-Related Emotions: Psychological and Biological Perspectives

According to Gray (1987), the common person on the street might see fear "as a state of mind or a state of feeling, having certain causal antecedents in the environment and leading to certain causal consequences in behavior" (p. 2). Acknowledging the role of the brain in human behavior, Gray further states that he views fear as a state of the neuroendocrine system, not of the mind. Fear is a natural part of everyday life and is an emotional state that occurs whenever humans are threatened or have the expectation of danger (Debiec & LeDoux, 2004; Rosen & Schulkin, 1998). It can also be a feeling of strong displeasure connecting itself with the thought of a future evil or unpleasant occurrence (Rauch, 1841). Anxiety and fear are two of the most intolerable emotions that humans are capable of experiencing (Pyszczynski, 2004). Humans are typically not ashamed of expressing hope, but most do not want others to know that they are afraid. Yet fear is arguably older and more powerful than hope (Rauch, 1841).

Fear has evolved as a part of the adaptive arsenal that is used by people in times of danger. In this context, fear can be (and has been) very functional and becomes part of a problem-solving mechanism. This view can be traced back to Aristotle, then Charles Darwin, and later was proposed by John Dewey (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998). These scholars defined emotions such as fear as action tendencies. When fear is evoked, action prepares people to flee or defend themselves or flight activating both somatic and autonomic systems and cognitive or perceptual processing. In contrast to the popular view, that emotions render a person dysfunctional and that one's ability to respond and reason is totally compromised, fear is a perceptual, behavioral, and motivational state that can prepare an individual to act to successfully defend themselves (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998).

Reiss (1987, 1991) made a distinction between two types of fears. The first type he called fundamental fears, which are fears of stimuli that are inherently common for most humans. Reiss suggested three fundamental human fears or sensitivities. The first is sensitivity to injury/illness related to injury, illness and death. The second is fear of negative evaluation which refers to apprehension and distress about being evaluated, rejected or censured by others (Watson & Friend, 1969). The third fundamental fear is of anxiety-related sensations that result from the belief that these feelings have harmful somatic, psychological or social consequences (Reiss, 1987, 1991). The second type of fears are common fears such as fear of public speaking, fear of heights, social fears, and fear of harmless animals. Reiss suggested that common fears can be reduced to fundamental fears. For example, a person who is afraid of public speaking does not feel this way because public speaking is dangerous, but rather he or she is afraid of negative evaluation.

Fear and anxiety are especially intriguing and important emotional states grounded in early human evolution (Öhman, 2008). Neuroscience has played a key role in understanding the role of emotions like fear and anxiety and demonstrates that fears, once learned, are very powerful forces in the brain (Debiec & LeDoux, 2004). While the experience of fear can be conscious, the brain mechanism generating fear and providing an appraisal of an event as fearful is unconscious and automatic (LeDoux, 1996), which is similar to the workings of other body organs (Rosen & Schulkin, 1998). This helps explain conditioned or learned fear reactions to stimuli such as a leadership figure or specific ethnic or racial groups, to environmental contexts such as the economy and to social or political triggers (Huddy, 2004).

According to LeDoux (2012) while there is a fine line between anxiety and fear, they are different. Fear is a negative emotional state triggered by the presence of a stimulus that has the potential to cause harm. Anxiety is a negative emotional state in which the threat is anticipated rather than present. Thus, human anxiety is greatly amplified by the ability to imagine the future and a place in it. The capacity to imagine the future can be used to great advantage when people envision how to make their lives better, but it can just as easily be less productive when they worry excessively about what is to come. This is extremely relevant to the study of leadership because leadership is associated with mobilizing people to face pressing challenges in order to create a better future (Heifetz, 1994). For some concern about future outcomes is essential for successfully meeting life and leadership challenges as well as opportunities. After all, fear and anxiety helped human ancestors cope with life's challenges and has allowed humans to survive and thrive for centuries.

Worrying is related to fear and anxiety and generally represents an intolerance of uncertainty. Worry represents a person's attempt to engage in mental problem solving on issues where the outcome is uncertain, but contains the possibility of negative results (Borkovec, 1994). Worry involves verbal-linguistic thinking (Borkovec & Inz, 1990); that is, people who worry believe that worrying prevents negative outcomes and that worrying minimizes the effects of negative events (Freeston, Rheaume, Letarte, & Dugas, 1994). Freeston et al. found that worrying alleviates feelings of guilt and prevents future disappointments and that worriers believe that worrying has positive effects and helps them find better ways of doing things and to find better solutions by increasing the worrier's perception of control over outcomes.

In the organizational context, job-specific worry has been defined as "the individual's attempt to engage in mental problem solving on situational job-related issues where the outcome is thought to be uncertain but contains a possibility for negative results" (Larsen, Øgaard, & Marnburg, 2005, p. 92). This definition makes a distinction between general worry, which is a personality trait that will likely not vary greatly as a function of the organizational and situational context, and job-specific worry that will depend on organizational and situational context.

Searles (2010) has shown that fear, anxiety, and worry are not exactly interchangeable. In the same research, worry was the most commonly reported emotion, anxiety the second, and fear a close third (Searles, 2010). At the same time, most respondents (Searles, 2010) who reported feeling anxious also reported feeling worried or fearful. Alternatively, respondents who reported feeling no anxiety also reported no feelings of worry or fear. Respondents were more likely to report feeling anxiety and fear, anxiety and worry, or fear and worry rather than report feeling fear alone. This is consistent with the suggestion made by Frijda (1993) that when people are asked to describe an emotional experience, often they do not simply report a single emotion precipitated by a single event. Instead they report a series of emotional transactions with the environment, all coherently organized around a single underlying theme. The results from Searles (2010) and the suggestion made by Frijda (1993) taken together support examining fear, anxiety, and worry in organizational leaders as a theme or cluster of fear-related emotions for the purpose of this study (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. Fear related emotions.

Within the organizational context emotions such as fear are best understood as role-based and irrational or chaotic and yet functional. This implies that there is a specific logic behind the experience of certain emotions such as fear (Lazarus, 2006). According to Lazarus, this logic implies that as an individual experiences an event, cognition or appraisal precedes the simultaneous arousal and emotional experience. For example a leader is getting ready to give a public presentation (the event) which is appraised as threatening or risky, the leader's heart starts to beat faster, mouth goes dry, palms are sweaty, legs begin to shake and at the same time the leader starts to experience fear. The intensity and quality of any given emotion depends on how the leader interprets events in his or her environment and how he or she chooses to manage this emotion. Like all humans, leaders are likely to experience fear-related emotions in the face of internal and external threats and crises. At the same time, leaders display emotion to influence their follower's emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Dependent on the situation or the circumstance, leaders may want to increase followers' experiences of fear-related emotions while in other situations or circumstances, leaders may want to minimize or alleviate followers' fear-related emotions. Yet, cultural display rules generally dissuade leaders from expressing their own fear-related emotions publicly, so they can project and display an image of confidence and expertise. This display of emotion follows certain display rules that are based on cultural norms and standards of behavior that dictate how to appropriately show emotion.

Relevant Models and Theories

This section highlights a number of pertinent theories, models and concepts relating to emotions in general and specifically to fear-related emotions to help ground this literature review in an appropriate conceptual framework. First, I highlight two relevant theories: the Affective Events Theory (AET) and Fear Appeal Theory. Both are useful to understand how a person reacts to threatening or risky events that may generate fear-related emotions. The concept of leader efficacy is also summarized due to its relevance to Fear Appeal Theory. Next, I briefly introduce the concepts of emotional regulation, emotional intelligence, and emotional labor. These three models or concepts highlight the experience with and management of emotions within a person or leader and the role of emotions in the leader-follower relationship.

Affective events theory. Affective events theory (AET) provided a seminal framework for understanding “the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work” (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996, p. 11). The AET also puts the focus on events as the proximal causes of affective reactions rather than the environment where the environmental features influence affect mainly by making affective events more or less likely. Affective events or experiences have direct influence on both behaviors and attitudes. AET holds that time is an important parameter where affect fluctuates (ebbs and flows) over time and is influenced by both endogenous characteristics (i.e., mood cycles or affective dispositions) and exogenous factors (i.e., the work environment, roles, or affectively relevant events). AET posits that these characteristics influence the way that individuals respond to work-related events (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2005). AET is based on the assumption that affective events cause emotional reactions, and that life and work-life are structured episodically, resulting in variations in emotional states that influence work attitudes and behaviors (Weiss & Beal, 2005). According to AET, individuals have endogenous patterns of affect such as personality-based predispositions towards certain emotions. For example, neuroticism is associated with negative affectivity or the tendency to experience negative affect (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991). However, life is punctuated by events that interfere with these endogenous patterns and act as exogenous influences on affect. These ‘‘affective events’’ are appraised by a cognitive process involving assessment of (a) the relevance of the event to personal well-being and (b) its importance. Initial appraisal is followed by more specific appraisal that focuses on dimensions such as potential for coping and consequences of the event. These appraisals produce the experience of discrete emotions (such as joy or anger). An additional component of AET is its description of how affect influences attitudes and behavior. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) argue that attitudes comprise both an affective element and a cognitive judgment element. Thus, attitudes are influenced by the experience of emotion and also by information such as contextual cues and previous experiences. Both the attitudes and the affect drive behavioral responses.

Fear appeal theory. Fear appeal theory has its roots in drive theory, which asserts that the fear elicited by the message (threat) produces an internal drive to reduce the experience of fear. The earliest of these theories is by Hovland, Janis, and Kelly (1953) and is known as the fear-as-acquired drive model. The Extended Parallel Protection Model (EPPM) is the most recent fear appeal theory (Witte, 1992, 1998). In general, the EPPM is an extension of previous research and theories on fear appeals. It is based on Leventhal's Parallel Process Model (PPM) (1970) and uses Rogers' Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) (1975, 1983) to explain the danger control part of the model (or when and why fear appeals work), and incorporates portions of Janis (1967) and McGuire's (1968, 1969) explanations (Witte & Allen, 2000). This model explains both when and why fear appeals work and when and why they fail. It also explains the possible response that individuals may have to a fear appeal message and places responses into three categories: non-response, danger control response and fear control response. Individuals demonstrate one of these three responses based on the interaction between their perception of the threat or danger (both severity and susceptibility) and their perception of the efficacy to avert the danger or threat (both self and response efficacy). When a threat or danger is portrayed as and believed to be serious and relevant, the person will experience fear. This fear motivates individuals to take action that will reduce their fear. Whether an individual controls the danger of the threat or controls their own fear about the threat depends on both self-efficacy (i.e., one's beliefs about his or her ability to perform the recommended response) and response efficacy (i.e., one's beliefs about whether the recommended response works in averting the threat). Higher perceived self-efficacy and response efficacy lead people to believe in their ability to implement an effective recommended response against the threat. They become motivated to control the danger and consciously think about ways to remove or lessen the threat (Witte, 1992). On the other hand, when people doubt that the recommended response will work (response efficacy) and/or doubt their ability to implement the recommended response (self-efficacy), they become motivated to control their fear instead because they believe that controlling the threat is not possible. People with low efficacy use several strategies to control their fear, such as denial or neglect to deal with the threat, defensive avoidance to not think about the threat, or reactance by simply ignoring the message. The more positive and constructive way of dealing with fear is to acknowledge it and use it as a motivator by choosing accountability for the situation, engaging in teamwork within the organization, and devising creative ways of dealing with fear generating threats. The EPPM assumes that the dimensions of the threat (severity and susceptibility) are additive and that dimensions of efficacy (self and response) are also additive. However, the relationship between threat and efficacy is multiplicative.

A common example from the organizational context is a sudden loss of a significant client or project which is often a threatening event or stimulus to the job security of both leaders and followers. The organizational leaders may have fear response or maladaptive response and resort to fear control strategies such as the denial of the significance of the loss or blaming the client and neglecting to take tough actions that ensure the survival of the organization. This response may be the result of the threat from the event itself and also from internal anxious or fearful thoughts about the necessary actions which will be needed to address the threat. On the other hand organizational leaders may choose an adaptive response and begin to take actions in the face of their fears. These adaptive actions might include cutting administrative costs, marshalling resources to create new sales which would replace the lost revenue. The EPPM model suggests that leaders' choice between adaptive or maladaptive response is a function of both response (the needed strategies to deal with the threat) and self-efficacy (leader's belief in his or her ability to implement these strategies). When efficacy is low, the response will be maladaptive and when efficacy is high, the response will be adaptive.

Leader efficacy. Given the important relationship between efficacy and fear as postulated by the EPPM (Witte, 1992), leader efficacy becomes a critical determinant of how leaders experience fear-related emotions. Self-efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet situational demands" (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p. 408). Efficacy can be developed through mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and arousal (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is a critical concept for this study and its research questions. It specifically has influence on leaders' ability to adapt in the face of challenges or threats, ability to make effective decisions and how the deal with stress as articulated by Bandura and Locke (2003) when they stated that efficacy belief

> affect whether individuals' think in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways, how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of difficulties, the quality of their well-being and their vulnerability to stress and depression, and the choices they make at important decision points. (p. 87)

According to Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, and Harms (2008) leader efficacy is made up of leader action self-efficacy (i.e. leader's beliefs in his/her ability to take the actions needed to meet situational demands), leader self-regulation efficacy (leader's openness to aspects of the self which can result in greater self-awareness and self-knowledge that lead to more effective self-regulation) and leader means efficacy which refers to Leaders' perceptions that they can draw upon others in their work environment such as peers, senior leaders and followers to support their leadership.

Emotion regulation. Gross (1998) defined emotion regulation as "the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express their emotions" (p. 275). In essence emotion regulation enables a person to down-regulate (decrease) or up-regulate (increase) the intensity of their positive or negative emotions.

Gross and Thompson (2007) suggested five emotion regulation families, see Figure 2.2. The first four are considered antecedent-focused or occur before event or situation appraisal and the last one is considered response-focused or occurs after appraisal and after emotional response (Gross & Muñoz, 1995). The first of these families is referred to as situation selection. According to Gross and Thompson (2007) "This type of emotion regulation involves taking actions that make it more (or less) likely that one will end up in a situation one expects will give rise to desirable (or undesirable) emotions" (p. 14). This strategy is the most forward looking approach to emotion regulation and requires an in-depth understanding of both the different characteristics of a given situation and of the potential emotional responses to these different characteristics. For example a shy person might avoid certain social situations in order to not feel social anxiety.

An individual can also attempt to directly modify a situation so as to alter its emotional impact. This is the second strategy or family and is known as situation modification. For example when a shy person attends a social function and strikes up a conversation with someone they know very well to avoid being with people they do not know who may make them nervous.

It is important to note that situation modification in this context refers to the external environment and not to internal situation within the person.

It is also possible to regulate one's emotions through attentional deployment, the third family, without changing the environment through situation selection or modification. Attentional deployment refers to "how individuals direct their attention within a given situation in order to influence their emotions" (Gross & Thompson, 2007, p.18). Examples of attentional deployment include physical withdrawal of attention (i.e., covering one's eyes and ears), internal redirection of attention through either distraction or concentration, and focusing on other's redirection of one's attention away from the situation.

Unlike the first four emotional regulatory processes, the last one, response modulation, occurs after emotional responses have been initiated. Response modulation refers to "influencing physiological, experiential, or behavioral responding as directly as possible" (Gross & Thompson, 2007, p. 22). Drugs such as alcohol and cigarettes are often used to deal with physiological response. Exercise and relaxation may also be used to decrease physiological and experiential aspects of negative emotions. People often hide or suppress their true emotions such as when a person hides their fear feelings when standing up to a bully (Gross & Thompson, 2007).

It is important to note that although this model of emotion regulation presents the regulation strategies as moving along with time from the situation to the response, the temporal response is recursive. This means that the emotional response later on in the process can and tend to change the situation that caused the emotional response in the first place which in turn gives rise to an entirely new situation. This new situation and its emotional response itself will need to be regulated. In essence there is dynamic and complex aspect of emotion and emotion regulation from the response back to the situation or to any of the other emotion regulation steps.

From neural systems perspective, Hartley and Phelps (2010) examined regulation of fear and focused on four specific regulation strategies: fear extinction (refers to fear extinction through learning that a previously threatening stimulus is no longer dangerous), cognitive regulation (using reappraisal, selective attention and suppression to modify a fear response), active coping (regulation through behaviors or actions which reduce exposure to fear evoking stimulus), and reconsolidation (when fear memory is disrupted after it is recalled through pharmacological or behavioral manipulation that block its reconsolidation). Hartley and Phelps suggested that extinction and cognitive change strategies use prefrontal inhibitory mechanisms to regulate amygdala driven fear expression. The authors also postulate that active coping and reconsolidation may be very useful when stress impairs the inhibitory mechanisms utilized in extinction and cognitive change.

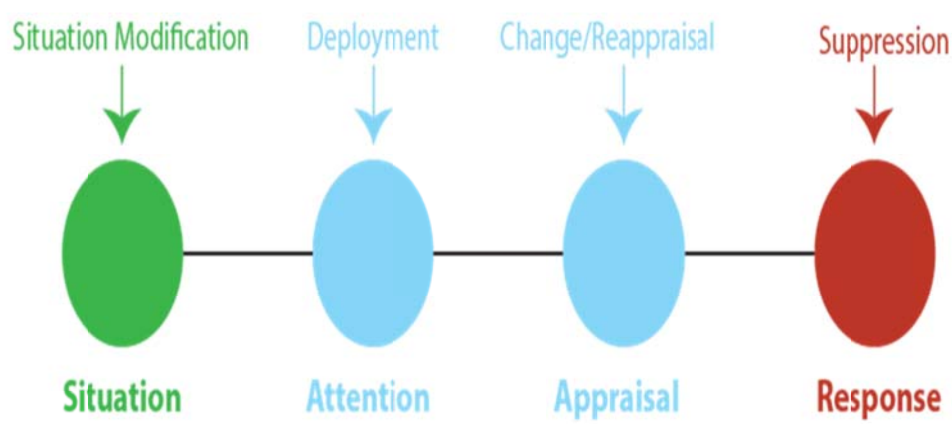

Figure 2.2. Process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998; Gross & Munoz, 1995; Gross & Thompson, 2007).

Emotional intelligence. The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) in their influential article "Emotional Intelligence" and defined emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). They proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence: the perception of emotion, the ability to reason using emotions, the ability to understand emotion, and the ability to manage emotions. The first step in understanding emotions is to accurately perceive them. In many cases, this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions. The next step involves using emotion to promote thinking and cognitive activity. Emotions help prioritize what we pay attention and react to; we respond emotionally to things that garner our attention. The emotions that we perceive can carry a wide variety of meanings. If someone is expressing angry emotions, the observer must interpret the cause of their anger and what it might mean. For example, if your boss is acting angry, it might mean that he is dissatisfied with your work; or it could be because he gotten a speeding ticket on his way to work that morning; or that he's been fighting with his wife. Lastly, the ability to manage emotions effectively is a key part of emotional intelligence. Regulating emotions, responding appropriately, and responding to the emotions of others are all important aspects of emotional management.

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), the four branches of their model are

> arranged from more basic psychological processes to higher, more psychologically integrated processes. For example, the lowest level branch concerns the (relatively) simple abilities of perceiving and expressing emotion. In contrast, the highest level branch concerns the conscious, reflective regulation of emotion. (p. 10)

Emotional labor. Emotions within leaders are often impacted by daily hassles and uplifts (affective events). These emotions are likely to invoke the need for emotional regulation when they are not consistent with the cultural display rules and norms. For example, if a work event generates fear emotion within the leader, this fear feeling may get in the way of the leader's desire to show confidence and to remain positive in the face of a threat or crisis. Therefore, this desire will require emotional labor from the leader in the form of surface or deep acting. Negative emotions, such as fear, typically require more emotional labor due to cultural requirements for leaders to remain confident and positive in the face of a threat or crisis (Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009).

The process model of emotion regulation mentioned above (Figure 2.2) has been related to emotional labor (Grandey, 2000). The four antecedent-focused regulation strategies (situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment and cognitive reappraisal) which regulate the precursors of emotions are associated with deep acting (Grandey, 2000). Surface acting is associated with response-focused regulation strategy where an individual suppresses or manipulates how she or he expresses their emotional response by adjusting the intensity of the emotion or faking it altogether (Grandey, 2000). In organizational settings, Grandey suggested that deep acting is more positively correlated with good performance, but both surface and deep acting could be related to burnout, withdrawal and negative work attitudes with surface acting having the larger impact.

Stimuli of Leaders' Fear-Related Emotions

Fear Appeal Theory postulates that when a threatening event or danger is portrayed as and believed to be serious and relevant the threatened person will experience fear. Given the importance of threats or stimuli, I next discuss the likely sources of threatening stimuli which can result in leaders experiencing fear-related emotions within an organizational leadership context. The first of these sources is the organizational context itself or the environment. Today's organizations exist in a very dynamic and uncertain context. Scholars have used several terms to describe the organizational context. For example, Vail (1996) characterized the organizational context as permanent white water referring to the turbulent and rapid changes organizational leaders have to deal with. Johansen (2012) uses the term VUCA, which stands for volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity to characterize the leadership context today and the threats and opportunities that come with it. Kegan (1994) used the phrase "in over our heads" to highlight how the constantly changing demands of modern life may developmentally exceed most people's mental capacity. Kegan (1994) stated

> The expectations upon us . . . demands something more than mere behavior, the acquisition of specific skills, or the mastery of particular knowledge. They make demands on our minds, on how we know, on the complexity of our consciousness. (p. 5)

This study encompasses incidents, events or situations in both the external and internal or cultural contexts. It should also be noted that the separation of the internal and external context is not possible as there is clear interdependence. The external and internal uncertainty, complexity, volatility and ambiguity can be a source of threatening stimuli to people in general and specifically to those choosing to lead in this context.

The second source of risks and threats to leaders, as previously described, is the exercise of leadership itself especially within a complex context which generates adaptive challenges (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Adaptive challenges are problems that cannot be solved by technical, authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures and require experiments and new discoveries from many places in organizations (Heifetz, 1994). In essence, dealing with adaptive challenges and complex problems often requires adaptive work (the process of mobilizing people to meet adaptive challenges such as new learning, running experiments, and taking smart risks) by all stakeholders. However, in the face of complex and adaptive challenges people mistakenly look to an ordered or technical response from administrative leaders or authority figures to provide simple and feel good solutions which seldom address the root causes of the problems and often fail. The irony is that administrative leaders themselves may misdiagnose the challenges and willingly provide familiar technical solutions when adaptive change is required. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) state “there’s a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change” (p. 14).

The third source comes from leaders and how they manage themselves in the face of external and internal threats. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) put it this way: “all too often we (leaders) self-destruct or give others the ammunition they need to shoot us down” (p. 163). At the individual level, leaders (like most humans) are susceptible to certain types of fears. For example, some personalities fear losing control; others fear being wrong, fear not being liked, fear losing connection, or fear being harmed or controlled—among others (Riso & Hudson, 1996). In complexity leadership (i.e. leadership seen as a complex dynamic involving all organizational members rather than only a role or attribute within a hierarchy), these fears will be invoked by the nature of the challenge being faced. First, the uncertainty and unpredictability associated with complexity can call forth high anxiety levels which may result in leader fear and anxiety. Second, the nature of enabling and adaptive leadership creates high levels of tension within the system and people tend to push back on individuals exercising leadership as if they were the cause for all the problems. This may summon the fear of not being liked or the fear of being unworthy. Additionally given the improvisations and experimentation required in solving adaptive challenges, leaders’ fear of being wrong is likely to be invoked.

Lastly, AET postulates that affective events within the workplace as they interact with the context or environment, the leadership process, and the affective traits or personality of the leader can be the source of leader fear-related emotions. While Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) suggested that work events are the proximal cause of affective reactions at work, for leaders' affective reactions outside the work environment from the external context may be just as critical or more so. Leaders, unlike employees, can be the source of affective events for employees (Dasborough, 2006). At the same time leaders are often expected to be the ones to be most aware of changes in the external context or environment. Therefore leaders are often on the front line and the ones first exposed to threats and opportunities in the external context (Heifetz, 1994). This is in contrast to internal events where leaders are often viewed as the source of affective events. For the purpose of this study, I argue that the external and internal environment generate the most threats or risk for leaders (affective events), followed by the leadership process and the events within the work environment, and then reactions based on personality or disposition of the leader.

Leaders' Experience of Fear-Related Emotions

Given the understanding of the emotional process in general and sources of fear-related emotions within leaders, I reviewed prior studies of experiences with fear-related emotions within the leader, the variation of fear-related emotions in different leaders (personality or traits influence), and how fear-related emotions influence the interaction between leaders and followers (relationship). This approach is based on and consistent with Ashkanasy's (2003) five levels of analysis in emotion research within organizations. Level 1 or within a person (leader) deals with emotions as experienced by individuals and accounts for the variability of emotions leaders may experience at work. Level 2 or between persons (leaders) includes individual differences between leaders such as emotional intelligence and trait affectivity. Level 3 or interpersonal interactions (leaders-followers) address interpersonal relationships and how leaders communicate their fear-related emotions to followers. At this level, leadership is viewed as managing interpersonal relationships. As such, models such as leader-member exchange and emotional labor are useful frameworks. Levels 4 and 5 deal with group and organization-wide perspectives respectively. Since this study is focused on the leaders' experiences of fear-related emotions, it is appropriate to only focus on the first three levels of analysis. In addition to highlighting leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, where possible, I also point out the influence of fear-related emotions on leaders' decision-making, relationship with followers, and leaders' well-being.

Fear-Related Emotions Within the Leader

Gooty et al. (2009) noted a need for more research on emotions within a person. This is consistent with my research effort for this study. However, through an extensive search, I was able to identify six research articles which address the emotional experience of leaders in general. Some of these articles, in part, address fear-related emotions within the leader.

Turner and Mavin (2008) published a qualitative empirical study engaging 22 United Kingdom senior leaders in semi-structured interviews, involving a life history approach to generate subjective narratives on the strutting and fretting of becoming a leader. In their research, Turner and Mavin also noted the lack of research on emotions within leaders, "seldom does mainstream research reveal the internal angst, emotions, self-questioning, self-doubt or the thoughts and feeling associated with different experiences of becoming a leader" (2008, p. 378). In terms of leader emotions, the researchers were interested in how emotion and vulnerability manifest in practice, given the lack of research on the "strutting and fretting" of leaders. The research revealed that leaders felt vulnerable, isolated, and emotional as they told their stories to the researchers; however, there was a question about whether leaders expressed or suppressed their strutting and fretting emotions when they were leading in real life. One conclusion was that authentic leadership theory may be over simplified in terms of leader emotional vulnerability in practice.

Staw and Barsade (1993) examined three hypotheses on affect and managerial performance. Two hypotheses contrasted the sadder-but wiser and happier-and-smarter effects on decision-making and the third on interpersonal behavior added a further test of the happier-and-smarter position. Data for this quantitative study came from an assessment project conducted by the Institute of Personality and Social Research (IPSR) at the University of California, Berkeley. 111 first year MBA students participated in an assessment-centered weekend. This assessment consisted of behavioral exercises, a decision simulation, in-depth interviews, and an extensive number of personality inventories. The research showed evidence which suggests that leaders experiencing negative affect such as fear can be more effective than their positive affect colleagues in certain situations. This is otherwise referred to as the "sadder-but-wiser" hypothesis.

In a qualitative research article, Barnard (2008) suggested that by focusing on five psychological attributes of CEOs (narcissism, over-optimism, fear, anger and depression), it might be possible to address the causes of corporate board dysfunction and hence concluded that the downfall of business can often be traced to the personality traits of the top corporate leaders. The article offered stories of highly visible American CEOs (Bill Gates, Jack Welch, Michael Eisner, Martha Stewart, Sandy Weill, Carly Fiorina, and Conrad Black, among others) as evidence of these pathologies. The article found these five traits in abundance in both successful and failed leaders. Four of the five traits (the exception was depression) may have positive consequences for an organization and all five may generate very harmful consequences. These include: hyper-deference, reluctance to provide truthful information to the boss, bullying and intimidation up and down the chain of command, and constantly-shifting corporate priorities. These problems may be compounded when the CEO suffers multiple pathologies (e.g., a CEO who is narcissistic, overly-optimistic, and angry). Problems may also arise when multiple leaders reinforce each other's pathologies. Specific to fear, the article suggests that evidence of fear is often hard to tease out, since most CEOs work hard to mask their fears from their followers and often from themselves. Sources of CEO fear may include changing markets, competition, economic conditions, critical media, pushy investors, and so on. CEO fear can also come from internal sources such as the fear of being an imposter, fear of failure, or fear of losing control. Fear can also be a great motivator for the leader, but can also cause them to make big mistakes. An example of fear’s contributions to big mistakes might be when a CEO pretends to have a quick fix to an adaptive or complex problem because of their fear of losing control or the fear of not being liked. Ultimately when the quick fix fails to work or solve the problem and it becomes obvious that the quick fix was a big mistake; it may ultimately lead to the CEO losing much of his or her creditability or even his or her CEO role. CEO fear can cause anxiety, sleeplessness, hyper-vigilance, withdrawal or other compensatory behavior. The article concluded with some prescriptions for board action.

A series of phenomenological studies were completed by Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) to understand the experiences of 65 public and private school administrators in the United States who have experienced significant crises or critical events in their practice of leadership. These leaders were profoundly affected or emotionally wounded by these experiences. This qualitative research utilized an interview approach using open-ended questions where the leaders shared first person accounts of their experiences with crisis. The focus of the paper was on the emotional dimension of being a leader and how leaders cope with four conditions of leadership life: vulnerability, isolation, fear, and power. As they told their crisis stories these leaders often mentioned fear, sometimes as the central theme (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2004). In this research, leadership fears included the fear of failure, the fear of change and not changing, the fear of being judged and criticized, and the fear of being fired or, even worse, losing their career identity. Another common fear was the fear of not measuring up to expectations. Leaders often disguised their fears, tried to keep fears at arm's length, and were unwilling to admit their fears in public. There was a wide perception that expressing fear was a sign of weakness. The wounding experience often provided the leaders with an opportunity to readdress their relationship to fear and to better understand the nature of their leadership fears. The researchers discussed how a crisis can be both the place where the leader can act courageously and also can be the place that most filled the leader with fear.

> The irony, of course, is that a school operates as if fear does not exist; the culture of schools and the culture of leadership do not offer much solace. We expect our school leaders to be fearless and most leaders agree; however, it is a reckless expectation. Fear is part of the human condition of leadership and schooling—particularly when wounded— and needs to be acknowledged, accepted and, we dare say, even embraced. (Ackerman & Maslin-Ostrowski, 2004, p. 322)

Clearly this research work applies beyond a school context to all leaders and organizations. Fear is a part of everyday personal and organizational life and hence is part of the lives of all organizational leaders. Crisis can be a great opportunity for leaders to come face-to-face with these fears, to question their leadership and how they experience and manage their fears, to learn from these experiences and to change.

O'Connor (2006) also conducted interpretive qualitative research on the emotions of the post-primary school principals in Ireland to better understand the role inner feelings played in their leadership role and the impact emotions had on their well-being and work. The data for this study was based on semi-structured face-to-face interviews with four principals conducted over a one-week period. He found that the job of school leader exerted a high emotional pressure on principals. The negative feelings the principals has about their leadership role were caused by a sense of loneliness, isolation, poor affirmation, poor control, and lack of the authority needed to deal with people issues. The paper called for further research into emotions within the leader, especially negative ones.

> Leadership, particularly in a period of rapid change, often deals with emotions—desire, fear, despair, caring, disillusionment, pain, anger, stress, anxiety and loneliness. Yet these critical issues tend to be neglected, played down, even denigrated in the literature, largely because emotionality has been cast in opposition to, and lesser than, rationality. (O'Connor, 2006, p. 47)

An insightful quantitative article by Bunker (1997) explored the challenges and power of leader emotional vulnerability. The article discusses a 5-day program that was offered to a number of senior leaders to increase their awareness, readiness and skills required to deal with human issues in change leadership. Bunker wrote about lessons learned which included:

1. Senior executives were not immune to the pain and sense of violation triggered by rapid change. They might just be better at hiding or faking it.
2. Most of the leaders in this course expressed feelings of being caught in between their expected roles and behaviors associated with their leadership persona and their true personal emotions and fears. They wore emotionally protective masks to deal with these internal conflicts. These masks came in the form of trying to be superhuman in the face of fatigue and shrinking resources, acting positive, upbeat and optimistic on

> the outside while they were frustrated, disenchanted and impotent on the inside, ignoring the pain in themselves and in followers, experiencing burnout, and pretending that the consequences of work stress were not having effects on their relationships both at work and at home.

Bunker (1997) also discussed the consequences of leaders masking their emotions for both the leaders and their organizations. He pointed out that leaders and their followers can get stuck in the early stages of the grieving cycle and that masking of their emotions can lead to the very situation leaders feared most, which was that the organization got stuck in its pains. Masking can also make leaders feel lonely during tough times and it presents a leader image that is lacking in authenticity, and in turn results in a lack of trust in the leader. From Bunker's work, personal vulnerability emerged as a core competency for leader success. Vulnerability opened the door for the leader to connect with followers at a very basic human level. There is no doubt that there is amazing power in leader vulnerability. However, how leaders find the courage and the willingness to own and engage with their vulnerability to fear-related emotions is one of the key questions of this study.

Delgado-Garcia and De La Fuente-Sabaté (2010) used quantitative research to assess how CEO affective traits, and their long-term tendency to experience positive or negative moods or emotions, influence strategic and performance conformity in the Spanish banking industry. The researchers sent surveys to the CEOs of all Spanish banks and 56 questionnaires were returned of which five were discarded because of incomplete information. The final sample was entirely composed of men with an average industry tenure of 25 years. There were no differences in performance or CEO tenure between the people who were included and those who were excluded, and no differences between early and late respondents. CEO affective traits were measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). The findings in this research support arguments and empirical evidence from other research that positive affect leads to innovative decisions and negative affect leads to more conservative and careful decisions. In other words, manager's negative affective traits are consistent with conformist strategies and more typical performance, while positive affective traits appear to align with outcomes that are different from the typical industry.

As mentioned earlier, another close cousin to fear is worry. Like any normal human being, leaders worry too. Over the last few years there has been increased interest in studying worry. Freeston et al. (1994) conducted two quantitative studies. The first described the development of two self-report scales to better understand why people worry. The first scale addressed why a person worries and the second scale contained intolerance of uncertainty. The second study examined the relationship between why a person worries and the intolerance for uncertainty, as well as measures of worry, anxiety, and depression. The results of this research showed that there were two types of reasons why people worry. First, worriers believed that worrying could prevent negative outcomes from happening, minimize the effects of negative events by decreasing guilt, avoid disappointment, or provide a distraction from thinking about things that were worse. Second, worriers believed that worrying had positive impacts like finding a better way of doing things, increasing one's control over a situation, and finding solutions for problems. Intolerance of uncertainty was related to defective problem solving, especially inadequate orientation to the problem, an elevated need for evidence, and the tendency to overestimate the risk of negative events.

This research offers support for traits as an important consideration in how different leaders react to uncertainty, especially given the uncertain nature of leadership. The study found an interesting relationship between the perceived level of worry and their conception of positive outcomes: low worriers believe that worry is positive and will likely be related to active cognition coping such as information seeking, logical analysis and problem solving; on the other hand, high worriers believe that worry is positive because it will likely be related to passive coping styles as a substitute for active action.

As shown above, research has shown that leaders sometimes feel vulnerable, anxious, worried or afraid when facing risky or threatening situations. Indeed leaders do experience fear and fear-related emotions. However, society, organizational norms, and cultures view the expression of negative emotions as a sign of weakness. As mentioned earlier, this has placed expectations on leaders to be strong and to hide emotions. It is important to point out that this masking of emotions also has a negative impact on leaders' well-being. The impact of emotions on leaders' well-being will be addressed later in this chapter.

Variation of the Experience of Fear-Related Emotions Between Leaders—Emotional Variation

At this level (variation between different leaders based on personality traits) of analysis, individual differences influence the emotional reaction or the emotional experience in terms of its intensity, duration of positive and negative emotions, and frequency (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011). I used research on trait affect and emotional intelligence to highlight how these aspects of leaders' personality affect the experience of fear and fear-related emotions.

Some of the research articles discussed above also addressed leaders' trait affect. For example, the research by Barnard (2008) addressed five dysfunctional personal attributes or traits of CEOs, including fear, and how these traits relate to the dysfunction of boards. Staw and Barsade (1993) compared the effects of sadder-but wiser and happier-and-smarter manager traits or psychological attributes on decision-making and overall performance. They found that in certain situations, leaders experiencing fear-related emotions tend to be more effective than ones experiencing the so-called positive emotions. As mentioned earlier, Delgado-Garcia and De La Fuente-Sabaté (2010) analyzed the influence of CEO affective traits on strategy and performance. The research showed that leaders' negative affective traits promote more conformist strategies and hence result in a performance that is typical or ordinary. A study by Freeston et al. (1994) also concludes leader traits are an important factor in how leaders differ in their response to uncertainty. These research papers have collectively shown the differential impacts of between-leader differences and the role these differences play in how leaders react differently to fear stimuli.

The question, for the purpose of this study, is how do leader traits influence the experience of fear and fear-related emotions? Are some leaders more prone to feel afraid in the face of threats than others? The leader trait perspective gained prominence early on, but has since fallen out of favor with leadership scholars. An excellent review of both the bright and dark sides of leader traits was conducted by Judge, Piccolo, and Kosalka (2009). In this review the authors asserted that "genetic sources of personality traits are now so well established that one might reasonably call it a law" (p. 860). For example, they mentioned that emotionally stable leaders are not likely to experience negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, or jealousy and that emotional stability is associated with subjective well-being. Bruck and Allen (2003) conducted a quantitative study to examine the relationship between the five big traits, negative affectivity, type-A behavior, and work-family conflict. Neurotic individuals are more likely to experience emotional instability, show characteristics of worrying and fear, and have bad moods linger (Bruck & Allen, 2003). It is likely that some leaders are more sensitive to threats than others.

Findings from the literature on emotional intelligence (EI) concept show that individual leaders differ in the way they process theirs and other's emotional information (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Mayer and Salovey define EI in terms of the individual's ability to (a) perceive, appraise and express emotions accurately and adaptively both within self and others; (b) understand emotion and emotional knowledge; (c) access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate cognitive ability and adaptive action; and (d) regulate one's own emotions and the emotions of others. Based on the above, one can see how these EI abilities might apply to a leader's fear emotion. One specific topic that I explored further was the ability of the leader to manage fear-related emotions in decision-making.

S. Williams, Zainuba, and Jackson (2003) tested the effect of positive and negative affectivity on risk perception and risk intention of 149 managers from a wide cross-section of industries and companies. The results of this quantitative study showed that managers who had positive affectivity were more likely to perceive risk situations as being less uncertain and were less likely to be concerned about personal risks from the decisions, but were not more likely to seek risk. On the other hand, negative affectivity managers viewed risk-related gains more negatively and were also more likely to avoid risk. In an earlier study, S. Williams and Voon (1999) tested the effects of 85 managers' moods on situational risk perception. They found that managers who experienced a positive mood tended to see situations as more positive which resulted in an increased probability of seeking risk. However, just like the study by S. Williams et al. (2003), affect was not found to have a direct influence on a manager's likelihood of seeking risk. Similarly, a study by Delgado-Garcia, De La Fuente-Sabaté, and De Quevedo-Puente (2010) explored bank CEO's affective traits and their influence on risk-taking. This qualitative study found that negative affective traits led to less risk-taking and positive affective traits did not influence risk-taking one way or the other. Specific to fear, and drawing on an appraisal-tendency framework, Lerner and Keltner (2001) found that fearful people were likely to express pessimistic risk estimates and risk adverse choices.

Leader personality traits have a direct effect of how they experience fear and fear-related emotions. Emotionally stable leaders are less likely to experience these emotions, while neurotic leaders are more likely to experience them. Emotional intelligence research also supports the notion that individual leaders differ in the way they process their own and others' emotional information. Research has shown that fearful leaders are more likely to be more pessimistic and make less risky decisions.

I do not intend by this review of the influence of leader traits on the experience of fear-related emotions to join the battle in the so called "nature-nurture" or the environment versus genetic controversy. Gray (1991) states that

> in relation to fear it (the nature-nurture question) must concern us in three different ways. First, there is the question of which stimuli can innately arouse fear. Secondly, there is the question of what forms of behavior innately occur in states of fear. Thirdly, there is the question of the extent to which the individual's particular degree of susceptibility to fear is determined by hereditary or the environment. (p. 6)

I am in agreement with Gray (1991) who postulated that all behavior is the result of an interaction between gene and the environment. In that sense it is nature and nurture. This section is merely intended to highlight the role of leader traits and not to conclude that traits are more important than the leadership environment.

Fear-Related Emotions and Interaction Between Leaders and Followers

At this level (interaction between leaders and followers) of analysis, I focused on the leader's display and communication of his or her fear-related emotions, or emotions in general, as part of their interaction with followers. The psychological process that leaders use to regulate their feelings and emotions is known as emotional labor (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). The emotional labor concept has been recently introduced to leadership research (Gardner et al., 2009; Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008). Leaders use emotional labor to influence followers during leader-follower interactions. Three forms of emotional labor have been proposed: surface acting, deep acting, and the display of genuine emotions (Gardner et al., 2009; Humphrey et al., 2008). When leaders suppress negative emotions such as fear and fake positive emotions by simulating observable emotions that are not truly felt, they are practicing surface acting. On the other hand, when leaders attempt to actually feel and not fake the emotion they want to display by modifying their inner feelings through changing the focus of personal thoughts or reappraisal of situations to experience and express appropriate feelings, they are engaged in deep acting. Leaders also perform emotional labor in a third way by regulating expressions of genuine emotion.

In a literature review article focusing on surface and deep acting, Humphrey et al. (2008) introduced the concept of leading with emotional labor. The authors contend that leaders have to display a wide range of emotions, including positive and negative affect. Leaders have to express both socially desirable and social control emotions in order to manage followers' emotions based on the circumstances. For example, leaders can show enthusiasm toward organizational goals or be stern toward an employee who is misbehaving at work. Humphrey et al. admit that emotional labor comes with a cost to the leader, especially the ones who employ surface acting. They suggest that surface acting can be stressful on the leader. At the same time, expressing the appropriate feelings is important to both task and relationship leaders. The researchers contend that

> Thus rather than telling managers and other leaders not to express their emotions, leaders need better training in how to express their emotions effectively. This may help leaders

> use either deep acting or genuine emotional expressions and avoid the harmful psychological effects that accompany surface acting. (Humphrey et al., 2008, p. 164)

The article did not address how leaders should express their genuine feelings of worry when social norms dictate that the leader show that they have it under control by maintaining total emotional composure.

Gardner et al. (2009) define emotional labor as the process of displaying appropriate emotions and also propose three forms of emotional labor: surface acting, deep acting, and display of genuine emotion. The article focuses on the cognitive influence of the leader's emotional labor on follower impression and trust in the leader. They contended that the leader surface acting will be negatively related to a favorable impression by followers and to leader felt and perceived authenticity. At the same time, leader deep acting and leader displays of genuine emotions will be positively related to a favorable impression by followers and to leader felt and perceived authenticity. The researchers propose that followers' favorable impressions and perceived authenticity of leaders will be positively related to trust in a leader. Additionally, leader emotional labor will influence a leader's felt authenticity, which will have a positive effect on the leader's well-being. Surface acting is negatively related to the leader's felt authenticity, but deep acting and the display of genuine emotion will be positively related to a leader's felt authenticity. Gardner et al. also argued that positive affective events, emotional intensity, and display rules may result in a leader's emotional labor. Furthermore, a leader's emotional intelligence (EI), self-monitoring, and political skills may moderate the relationship between emotional labor and its antecedents. The article discussed a basic dilemma faced by leaders who want to be authentic with their emotion, "can leaders exhibit the emotional display that contextual factors dictate as appropriate for effective leadership while remaining true to their experienced emotions? That is, is it possible for leaders to exhibit flexible emotional reactions across a wide variety of contexts without violating their sense of self?" (Gardner et al., 2009, p. 479). Leaders do face a wide range of situations which can generate one emotion within the leader, i.e. fear, worry, or anxiety, and yet require them to display confidence, optimism and other positive emotions when they are not genuinely feeling them.

Brotheridge and Grandey (2002) empirically measured managers' emotional labor using a sample of 238 Canadian full-time employees. Their quantitative study compared two perspectives of emotional labor as predictors of job burnout beyond the effect of negative affectivity: job-focused (work demands regarding emotion expression) and employee-focused (regulation of feelings and emotional expression) emotional labor. They found that the perception that the job required high levels of hiding negative emotions, such as anger and fear, was the only factor that was significantly related to emotional exhaustion.

Glasø and Einarsen (2008) conducted a quantitative study with a sample of 135 leaders and 207 followers to investigate the extent to which leaders and followers express, suppress, or fake their emotions during interactions. The results of this study showed that most of the leaders admitted to having faked (94.8%) or suppressed (97.9%) emotions in interactions with followers. The leaders faked positive emotions such as enthusiasm and happiness and suppressed negative emotions such as uncertainty, worry, and anxiety. The top ten most suppressed emotions by leaders were (in order): boredom, frustration, annoyance, disappointment, anger, resignation, sadness, uncertainty, worry, and anxiousness. The research also showed that leaders expressed naturally felt, faked, and suppressed emotions more intensively than the followers. This suggested that leaders regulate their emotions when interacting with followers to a greater extent than do followers. Furthermore, this study suggested that negative or socially undesirable emotions such as fear are usually suppressed by both leaders and followers. These high levels of emotion regulation are likely associated with low job satisfaction and higher levels of subjective health complaints. Suppressing and faking emotions may negatively impact the relationship between leaders and followers and deprive them of valuable information for better decision-making (Glasø & Einarsen, 2008).

The literature described above suggests that leaders often fake positive emotions and suppress their negative emotions including fear-related emotions when interacting with their followers. Leaders who want to be emotionally authentic are sometimes faced with the dilemma of showing their true feelings, such as fear or giving in to social and cultural norms, or displaying faked confidence. At the same time, authenticity and the expression of true feelings are very important to the leader-follower relationship. Emotional labor and emotion regulation are two strategies often used by leaders to influence their followers; however, deep acting and especially surface acting come with a heavy cost to the well-being of the leader. Low job satisfaction, higher health complaints, and emotional exhaustion are often the cost of hiding or faking emotions like fear, anxiety, and worry. Considering the impact of emotional labor and emotion regulation on the health and well-being of the leader, I now share a few research articles on executive or leader stress.

The Impacts of Fear-Related Emotions on the Leader's Well-Being

Sutherland and Cooper (1995) conducted a quantitative study to better understand the lifestyle and pressures that CEOs face. They surveyed 118 CEOs with 93 of their spouses/partners. With 8.5% of the CEOs indicating that they did not have a partner, this resulted in 88 matched pairs of CEOs and spouses/partners. The research found that 27% of respondents admitted that they were worried about their health. The younger CEOs were more likely to be worriers where 32% of the CEOs aged younger than 50 years or less indicated that they worried about their health. Also 34% of the spouses/partners were concerned about the effect of work on the health of their partners. In addition, CEOs aged 50 years or less were significantly more anxious than those aged 51 or higher. Of the sample, 25% of CEOs believed that they were at "high" or above average risk of job burnout. Comparisons were also made to a ten-country survey of executive stress (Cooper, 1984). The authors conclude that executives in the 1995 survey were more likely to acknowledge the pressure of work-related travel and interpersonal relationships of organizational life at the top than they did in 1984. The authors concluded that the quality of life had become more important to these top leaders in the 1995 survey and they were no longer willing to do the job of leadership at any cost.

Little, Simmons, and Nelson (2007) conducted a quantitative study that extended prior studies of stress by examining the positive psychological state engagement, the negative psychological state burnout, the positive behavior forgiveness, the negative behavior revenge, and their influence on the health of leaders. In this study, negative affect (NA) was defined as a dimension of subjective distress that included a variety of adverse mood states including anger, contempt, disgust, fear, and nervousness. NA can be measured as both a state and a trait affect. The sample for this study was 94 church pastors. The authors assert that the jobs of pastors and leaders in all types of organizations are similar with both experiencing family stress and expectations of perfection from others. Both are often socially isolated and expected to remain strong and calm in the face of distress. The results of this study suggest that when distress manifests itself in even a small degree of revenge behavior, it can be detrimental to a leader's health. Both burnout and negative affectivity had negative consequences on leader's health.

Taken all together, the above studies show evidence that fear-related emotions increase stress in the lives of leaders, which in turn has a negative impact on their health and well-being.

Specifically, suppressing and faking these emotions rather than being authentic is more stressful and has negative consequences on leaders' health.

The Need for Courage as the Way Forward

The word courage brings up images of bravery, heroism, perseverance, boldness and endurance. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines courage as "mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty" (Courage, n.d.). But before delving further into the definition of courage (the what) and how it applies to leaders and leadership (the how), it is important to understand the reasons we should be interested in the study of courage and leadership (the why). The need for courage stems from the same reasons that we need leadership. Organizations, communities, and societies alike are facing an increasingly unpredictable future, a future which offers economic, environmental and social challenges. As a result, like never before in history, organizations are asking their employees to change often and quickly. These challenges require leadership to deal with varying levels of risk, fear, and decision-making—all of which require courage. Courage has been regarded as one of the greatest virtues because it helps people to face their challenges, both individually and collectively.

Leading people in this uncertain era brings a unique set of challenges and requires both the will and the skill from those who choose to exercise leadership. At the same, it is hard to imagine how any organization can succeed in this environment without employees and leaders willing to take risks, challenge the status quo, explore new market opportunities, and risk their own reputation or self-esteem to try new innovations that may fail. All of the above require courage and leadership.

Leadership has been defined as "mobilizing people to tackle tough problems" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 15). Mobilizing people to face tough challenges, or the exercise of leadership, is scarce because it entails discomfort and risk for both the leader and their followers. Heifetz makes a key distinction between technical or routine challenges and adaptive ones. Unlike routine and technical challenges where people can use prior knowhow to address them, adaptive challenges have no clear or easy solution and therefore often require experimentation and/or change in the way people think and behave.

Loss, experimentation, and required learning are examples of the difficult work required that makes mobilizing people to face their adaptive challenges an inherently risky and dangerous activity for those who choose to exercise leadership. As stated in the first chapter, Heifetz et al. (2009) state that

> The word leader comes from the Indo-European root word Leit, the name for a person who carried the flag in front of an army going into battle and usually died in the first enemy attack. His sacrifice would alert the rest of the army to the location of the danger ahead. (p. 26)

It takes courage for leaders to be willing to place themselves in harm's way for the greater good.

What makes adaptive leadership a dangerous and risky venture is the need to challenge people's ways of thinking and behaving, to which they have grown loyal over time. In physics and engineering, systems are said to be in a static state (or state of equilibrium) where all forces cancel each other out or in a dynamic state (or state of disequilibrium) where forces acting on a system make it move in one direction or another. Human systems, both at individual and institutional levels, tend to like stability. Exercising leadership often means disturbing the equilibrium and creating a state of disequilibrium so that the system moves into a new state. This dynamic state is most often met with resistance by established systems. Individual and systems resistance can be directed at the source that is pushing against the system. Resistance can take the forum of marginalizing, diverting, seducing, or attacking the source of disequilibrium

(Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Again, this makes exercising leadership a risky and dangerous undertaking which requires both the skill and the will from anyone choosing to exercise leadership.

According to Heifetz et al. (2009) “if leadership involves will and skill, then leadership requires the engagement of what goes on both above and below the neck. Courage requires all of you: heart, mind, spirit and guts” (p. 37). Adaptive leadership requires connecting at cognitive, emotional, and physical levels with the people facing the challenge as well as understanding their deep values and beliefs as well as their insecurities. Adaptive leadership also requires anyone who chooses to exercise leadership to connect with their whole self and engage followers at multiple levels.

Organizations, communities, and societies today face many uncertainties and complexities that can be characterized as adaptive challenges. When it comes to exercising adaptive leadership to face these challenges, the stakes can be very high and require courage on the part of leaders and followers. For example, leaders need courage to overcome many obstacles including the fear of introducing a new direction and being ridiculed, laughed at, or belittled. The fear of failure and the fear of being wrong, given the improvisation and experimentation required, is also an obstacle. Leaders and people in general, need to know and understand courage so they might be able to rise to the occasion to overcome adversity and improve their lives. To that end, I next review literature addressing the definition of courage, including its relationship to fear, and briefly discuss how courage can be learned as well as how it relates to leadership.

What Is Courage?

The dictionary defines courage as facing or dealing with danger, difficulty, or pain (Guralnik & Charlton Grant, 1979). Rachman (1990) defines courage from a psychological perspective as persistence in the face of emotional and physical sensations of fear. Walton (1986) defines courage from a philosophical perspective as:

1. The actor intends or realizes some moral end.
2. The actions taken are practical, skillful and deliberate. They go beyond the call of duty and involve overcoming fear.
3. The actor expects the actions to make a difference in furthering his or her moral end in a specific situation.

Just like some definitions of leadership, courage as defined above is not merely a personality trait, but rather as actions that any individual can take to achieve a moral goal or noble objective. To better understand courage, I want to first explore its philosophical origin. A key element of Walton's definition is that courage is contextual and not inherent, e.g. a parent would be courageous in order to save their children from harm, but might not be courageous to save someone else's children.

According to Putman (2010), there are three types of courage: physical, moral, and psychological. O'Byrne, Lopez, and Peterson (2000) identify three types of courage: physical, moral, and vital. The authors looked at physical courage as the maintenance of societal good by the expression of physical behavior that is grounded in the pursuit of socially valued goals. Moral courage is being authentic in the face of the discomfort of dissention, disapproval, or rejection. Vital courage is the perseverance through persona, struggle, disease, or disability even when the outcome is uncertain.

Courage as a concept has roots that go back to the earliest human writings (Putman, 2010). In the leadership context, for example, Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. demonstrated leadership courage by standing up for higher moral standards and showing both physical and moral courage as they mobilized their constituents to face national adaptive challenges in both India and the United States of America. According to Putman, there are four philosophical traditions that represent different dimensions of courage and have guided our understanding of courage over the years.

The first is the Aristotelian tradition. Aristotle discussed what is commonly known today as physical courage. History shows that human beings had to defend themselves from threats and dangerous situations in order to survive and thrive. Hence without courage, society over time could not achieve its goals, defend its ways of living, or protect its families. It is important to note that Aristotle looked at courage as a mean between the two extremes of cowardice, where one avoids danger at all costs even when it is necessary to face it, and rashness, where one faces danger in a careless way or in ways that hide or mask their other motives. Aristotle also distinguished between courageous acts and courage as a trait (Putman, 2010). He argued that character is mainly made up of habits and habits are made of acts that a given person performs on a regular basis. When we see courageous acts they could be coming from character or they could be a one time or isolated act of courage. Without minimizing individual courageous acts, using this distinction means overcoming fears must become more the norm for an actor to be courageous.

According to Aristotle, five types of actions frequently give a false impression of courage. The first are acts done because of or motivated by fear. For example, when leaders act or behave in certain ways because they are afraid of not being liked or of being negatively talked about. If fear for self dominates the motive for an action, the act according to Aristotle is not courageous or fully courageous. This is not to be confused with fear on behalf of someone else such as one's family or fear for a noble cause. The second type is an action driven by expertise where the expertise allows a person to be perceived as brave in non-dangerous situations. For example, an expert knows that a certain situation is not dangerous when the average person may perceive that same situation as being dangerous due to a lack of knowledge. The third type is an action that seems brave but is based only on emotion. Aristotle argued that instinct and emotion alone are not courage. For an action to be courageous, it must be preceded by a decision to act and a noble cause. The fourth type is actions done by people who are overconfident. Aristotle believed that overconfident people tend to overestimate their ability and underestimate the danger they are facing. The fifth type is actions done out of ignorance when a person does not fully understand the situation.

According to Putman (2010), Aristotle's points have been debated over the years and new questions have been raised such as whether one needs to be afraid to be courageous or in other words does the fear feeling precede courage? Another question is whether one can be courageous in the pursuit of a goal that he or she perceives as noble but society does not. Putman (2010) wisely asks, "Can a Ku Klux Klan member or Gestapo member be courageous?" (p. 12)

The second tradition is the Stoic tradition. In contrast to Aristotle who perceived courage as active, Stoics analyze courage through its passive qualities. Stoics assume that people do not have much control over what happens to them or most of what happens to them in life. Natural events such as storms, earthquakes, and disease, as well as the thoughts and actions of other people are beyond one's control. Stoics believe that human beings waste too much time worrying about things they cannot control and therefore waste large parts of their time being resentful or frustrated over events they cannot influence. In this sense, the Stoic view of courage means avoiding social peer pressure in everyday life and acting with integrity. Courage then means the defense of one's self-worth and maintenance of internal freedom in the face of external pressures. This type of courage is referred to today as moral courage.

Moral courage can also have active aspects to it. In the organizational context, an example of this type of active courage could be when an employee raises his or her concern about an issue that is noble and affects many employees, such as the mistreatment of a certain class of employees based on race or sex. On the other hand, not doing anything can be considered cowardice.

Putman (2010) raises two important points about the Stoic tradition. The first is the Stoics believe that a person is responsible for how they feel. He or she decides how to emotionally react to an event. We cannot blame others for how we react emotionally or feel as a result of what they do to us. Being angry, for example, is a choice one makes and no one can make us angry without us choosing to be angry. The second is that people who are hedonists or pleasure seekers have given up their freedom to whatever pleasure happens to be in front of them at the moment. Hence, in the highly pleasure-oriented Western society, pleasure seeking may get in the way of freedom. Freedom requires discipline and responsibility for personal choices and one cannot be solely led by their emotions and desires. The point the Stoics are making here is that a person needs to know that his or her thoughts, actions, and responses are literally his or hers to decide so one may realize that he or she has more options (Putman, 2004).

The third tradition is the existentialist tradition. Putman (2010) refers to this as psychological courage. In his analysis of the existentialist tradition, Putman refers to two points that were raised by David Hume in the 1700s. The first is that courage can be contagious or if one person begins to be courageous, he or she may affect the people around them and increase their level of bravery. The second point is that excessive courage can destroy other virtues such as generosity, kindness, or understanding. Putman (2010) puts Hume's points in this way "it takes psychological courage to accept aspects of oneself that those around one may ridicule" (p. 16). If psychological courage is taken to an extreme, it can create peer pressure that blocks other virtues. It takes psychological courage to face one's fears and to be vulnerable or open to other aspects of ourselves.

Existentialism is about individual responsibility and having authenticity. In that sense, courage is essential to facing up to the falseness and superficiality of society. Sartre (1957) links freedom and courage. In Sartre's mind one is his or her choices so a person is literally what he or she chooses to do. Sartre asserts that for human beings unlike animals "existence precedes essence" (p. 13). Human beings can use self-awareness to overcome biological tendencies and to choose actions to take. Therefore these actions (our existence) precede and establish what we then become (our "essence"). Human beings sometimes exhibit cowardice by running away from one's freedom to choose an action and let circumstances become excuses for inaction. This inaction or avoidance of free choice is called inauthenticity by most existentialists (Putman, 2010). In contrast, when a person makes authentic choices he or she realizes and accepts the freedom to make choices. The choice to die for a cause in the face of the natural need for self-preservation is one of the most powerful examples of one's ability and freedom to choose. Hence, courage is at the heart of one's ability to be authentic.

Existentialists assert that most people do not like making their own choices and would rather have someone else do it for them. The realization that human beings have a choice leads to a tension called existential anxiety because choice also implies responsibility for the decisions and actions taken. When a person does not make excuses, makes authentic choices, avoids self-deception, and comes face-to-face with their existential anxiety, they have put psychological courage into action.

In the leadership context, when people panic, deny, or neglect to deal with adaptive challenges, they are often avoiding making accountable and courageous choices. Some organizations are very good at avoiding the challenges they face or are good at engaging in distractions that neglect to deal with the real issues that might be in the way of excellence. Individual and organizational courage is essential to overcoming these human tendencies, facing the fear of taking responsibility, and mobilizing people to tackle adaptive challenges.

Unlike the first three traditions which are based on Western philosophy, the fourth tradition of courage is based on Eastern philosophy. At the heart of Eastern tradition is the cultivation of a deeper understanding and that positive actions follow from greater awareness (Putman, 2010). It takes psychological courage to open up to the moment, to be present, and to face the fear of giving up habitual and comfortable thought processes to take action when one knows those thought processes have stopped serving them well. Eastern philosophers contend that people fear the death of the psyche or ego if their awareness is increased and their habitual thought routines are changed. For many, this could be more frightening than the fear of death or physical injury. In this sense, courage is facing up to these fears.

Relationship Between Fear and Courage

Pury and Starkey's (2010) research focuses on whether courage is seen as rare, lofty, and worthy of acknowledgement (courage as an accolade) or whether courage is seen as something that happens many times in the span of an individual's life. In this sense, courage is seen as a process by which an individual can overcome risks for a worthy cause or goal (courage as a process). Pury and Starkey indicate that fear is a questionable component of courage as an accolade. A study conducted by Rate, Clarke, Lindsay, and Sternberg (2007) shows that fear may or may not be required for a given act to be considered courageous. In fact, Rate et al. require the absence of fear in some of their definitions of courage. By contrast, Pury and Starkey suggest that fear plays a very important role in the courage associated with psychotherapy. Psychotherapy is a process used to guide change in behavior through better awareness so one can change the way they see themselves and how they interact with others. An individual needs psychological courage to face unpleasant aspects of themselves. The process of becoming more aware can invoke intense fear and anxiety. Examining one's beliefs, letting go of the past, and accepting psychological losses that come with letting go of the past require a leap of faith into the unfamiliar. Pury and Starkey assert that fear plays a strong role in courage as a process. They relate general courage to courage as an accolade and personal courage to the process people use to overcome fear and personal limitations (courage as a process).

Hardiness

Another concept that is useful in the study of fear and courage is hardiness. Maddi (2006) conceptualizes hardiness as a combination of three attitudes: commitment, control, and challenge. A person who is strong in commitment is one who believes that it is important to stay engaged with the people and events around him or her, no matter how stressful things become. This person dislikes alienation and isolation. A person who is strong in control is a person who continues to have influence on the outcomes around them even in the most difficult circumstances. This person thinks it is a mistake to slip into powerlessness and passivity. A person who is strong in challenge is one who sees stress as a normal part of life and an opportunity to learn, develop, and grow. This person feels entitled to comfort and security.

Maddi asserts that these three attitudes provide the courage and motivation to do the necessarily hard work of turning stressful situations from challenges into opportunities. He also asserts that these are learned, growth-oriented, personality buffers that can help a person turn fearful and stressful situations into advantages, as well as lead to better performance and better health. Maddi contends that life is inherently stressful and goes on to write that “in order to grow and develop, one must choose the future, even though this is anxiety provoking, as the outcome is uncertain. Facing this anxiety, and growing in the process, requires courage” (p. 162). For Maddi, hardiness constitutes the courage and motivation to face and transform life’s stressors rather than denying or avoiding them. He equates hardiness to existential courage.

Maddi and Kobasa (1984) conducted research on manager hardiness at Illinois Bell Telephone. They followed employees experiencing major stressors to assess if there were individual differences in how they dealt with the fear and stress that resulted from the long anticipated deregulation and divestiture of the telecommunication industry. They found that roughly two-thirds of the employees studied showed significant performance, leadership, and health deficits in the face of these stressors. In this group of employees, there were heart attacks, strokes, obesity, poor performance reviews, demotions, depression, anxiety states, burnout, substance abuse, divorces, and the like. However, the remaining one-third of employees studied maintained health, happiness, performance, and actually thrived on the upheavals. For them, the changes provided new opportunities. Despite experiencing as much disruption as their peers, these hardy people rose up in the company, felt renewed enthusiasm, showed little illness, and often even improved family relationships as a side effect of the upward turn.

Learning To Be Courageous

When individuals learn and develop the ability to be courageous, they build a range of effective responses to potential risks and threats. They are also able to be persistent in achieving their goals when challenged. Lester, Vogelgesang, Hannah, and Kimmey (2010) suggest two benefits to individuals from learning and developing courage. The first is bolstering individual agency or the capacity to exercise control over one's life. Courage has a dampening effect on the immediate human flight response to threats or danger, which in turn aid a person's ability to choose the appropriate response. There is a direct correlation between the four core features of human agency outlined by Bandura (2001) (intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness) and courage (Lester et al., 2010). For example, Szagun (1992) suggests that intentionality is an important characteristic of courage since an individual has free choice and can take courageous action in the face of challenges so he or she can achieve useful goals and/or noble purposes. Also, when an individual scans the environment for risks and threats before taking action, he or she is using forethought to plot their course of action and not act in rash ways. Self-reactiveness describes an individual's ability to self-motivate and self-regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (Lester et al.). Finally self-reflectiveness is the ability of an individual to stand back, assess, and reflect on their thoughts and actions so that learning and course correction can happen, if needed. These four core features of human agency can strengthen, and be strengthened by, the individual's courageous thoughts and actions over time.

The second benefit according to Lester et al. (2010) is bolstering a courageous cognitive affective processing system. Lester et al. draw on the work of other scholars who suggest that self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), being in a hopeful state (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007; Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2002), and resilience (Hannah & Luthans, 2008; Masten & Reed,

2002) can be developed to form a courageous cognitive affective processing system (Mischel & Shoda, 1998). Over time, an individual makes gains in self-efficacy, being in a hopeful state, and resilience through reflection on their courageous actions. These gains in personal resources can become more habitual and be accessed in threatening or risky situations.

The benefits of developing courage extend beyond individuals to organizations and systems. Lester et al. (2010) suggest that developing courage can also bolster the collective organizational agency, increase innovation, and improve overall organizational performance.

Using social learning theory (SLT) (Bandura, 1977) and the broader social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1986), Lester et al. (2010) propose both unstructured and systematic ways for developing courage. Unstructured development happens mostly through observational learning and is based on the linkage between attention-retention-reproduction-motivation processes (Bandura, 1977). Unstructured development may be possible by watching role models exhibit courage and is largely dependent on the individual's desire to learn and their ability to carry the burden of learning on their own. Systematic courage development can too be dependent on role models; however, social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura, 2001) outlines learning mechanisms (enactive mastery, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and psychological and emotional arousal) that are useful to the systematic development of courage (Lester et al., 2010). Through structured and/or unstructured development, it is clearly possible to develop courage both at the individual and systematic levels.

Leadership and Courage

Using adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994) as the framework where leadership is defined as an activity rather than a role or title, we can begin to establish a clear link between courage and leadership. I contend that without courage it is nearly impossible to exercise much adaptive leadership. Heifetz emphasizes diagnosing the type of challenge people face prior to engaging in the solution(s). The challenges can be simple or complex and technical in which the community, organization, or team already know the problem and the solution. Perhaps not everyone knows the problem, but someone, usually in a position of authority, has experienced the same challenge and knows the solution as well as how to implement it. However, even when people are facing technical challenges where the problem has a clear definition, where the solution is known, and where its implementation can be clearly outlined, courage is still needed to close the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Fear fosters and encourages the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 1999). Often times implementing known solutions takes a lot of courage.

One example of this is the heart patient who is told by his or her doctor that they need heart surgery to unclog their arteries so they can live. This is the technical solution to dealing with heart disease. Yet some patients keep postponing the surgery because they are afraid of anesthesia or of dying from other complications. In this example knowing was not enough to take action. There is a common fear of risk even when the patient knows that the chances of success are very high. Another example within the business context is that many managers know that having the right people in their organizations and in the right positions is key to the success of their organization. Yet, many are unable to make the tough decision of removing someone from their position or the organization and replacing them with someone better. Leaders and managers often try sending a person they know is not right to more training and giving them more time even when it is clear this person is not a good fit for the organization or the position. This is due in part to a fear of not finding someone better, a fear of failure, or a fear that the situation may not improve in the future.

On the other hand, challenges can be adaptive. According to Heifetz (1994) the need for adaptive work comes about when the complexity of the challenge or problem precludes both a simple and clear definition of the problem and the solution is not simple or known altogether. For the purpose of this dissertation, it might be useful to look at leadership challenges in a continuum where on one end lay the simplest technical challenges and on the other end lay the most complex adaptive challenges. The logic for this continuum is that oftentimes life challenges come bundled with both technical and adaptive elements, in which even the most complex adaptive challenges may have some technical aspects to them. There are challenges wherein the problem is known and the technical aspects of the solution is also known; however, the problem cannot be solved with purely a technical approach. Heart disease is an example of this type of challenge. It is often easy to diagnose the condition and when the patient's arteries are blocked, it is within the technical expertise of a heart surgeon to perform surgery to unclog the blocked arteries. What is also known is that simply unclogging the patient's arteries is insufficient to fully treat the problem. Heart patients are often instructed to change their life habits with better and healthier food, with more and regular exercise, to stop smoking, and to better manage stress. These aspects of the problem are adaptive and require a change in the patient's attitude, beliefs and habits.

The risk and danger to people who choose to exercise leadership is likely to increase along the continuum. Wherein simple technical problems have the least risk and complex adaptive challenges have the most risk and thus requiring more courage on the part of the leader. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) spoke to this relationship:

> There's a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change: the deeper the change and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there be and, thus, the greater the danger to those who lead. For this reason, people often try to

> avoid the danger, either consciously or subconsciously, by treating adaptive challenge as if it were technical. (p. 14)

Another important distinction that Heifetz (1994), Heifetz and Linsky (2002) and Heifetz et al. (2009) make is between authority and leadership. Most people equate leadership with the formal authority that comes with certain roles or positions. Even when people intuitively see a difference, it is often attributed to personal attributes. Leadership is also different from informal authority that comes from gaining credibility, trust, respect, admiration, or moral authority. People with formal or informal authority can fail to exercise leadership or mobilize followers to tackle tough adaptive challenges.

According to Heifetz (1994) and Heifetz et al. (2009) formal and informal authority have the same structure wherein one party (the authorizers) entrusts the other party (the authority figure(s)) with power and influence in exchange for services such as problem solving. This authority relationship works very well when the problems are technical in nature and people can solely rely on authority figures to provide the solution without the need for any adaptation by followers. What makes this relationship problematic when exercising adaptive leadership is that adaptive leadership is often times about challenging some of the authorizers' expectations and disappointing them, which inevitably triggers resistance. This dynamic makes it essential that leaders have the will and courage to exceed the scope of their authority, accept the fact that they may not be liked in the short-term, and understand that people may want to get rid of them. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) mention seduction, marginalization, diversion, and attack as a few strategies that people use to resist adaptive change and reduce the discomfort that comes from facing adaptive challenges.

What makes facing adaptive challenges difficult and frustrating is that they require experimentation—there are no obvious or easy answers. In complex adaptive challenges, learning is often required to both define the problem(s) and the solution(s). People choosing to exercise adaptive leadership need both the will (courage) and the skill to do so.

Leadership and courage are related in many ways. First, both leadership and courage require moral values. According to Heifetz (1994), the term leadership is value-laden. He argues that society cannot continue to have it both ways. On the one hand, we use the word leader to describe people who influence others such as Hitler or Pablo Escobar, even when we detest their values, because they motivated many followers to their cause. On the other hand, we speak of leadership as something that we need more of today to help deal with tough problems. Clearly the type of leadership that Hitler or Escobar provided is not morally useful and hence cannot be called leadership.

Like leadership, courage requires doing the right thing. Otherwise we would call a thief or murderer courageous. Courage cannot be merely defined as overcoming one's fears. Only actions which are in the service of a higher purpose, moral principle, or common good are called courageous actions.

Second, all forms of courage are important to exercising leadership. For example, physical courage is an important part of exercising leadership. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the origin of the word leader from the Indo-European root word Leit implies physical courage wherein the leader referred to the person who often died in the first enemy attack. People like Martin Luther King Jr., Anwar Sadat, and Yitzhak Rabin literally died while exercising leadership. Leadership can be met with resistance that often comes in the form of physically attacking the person who is mobilizing people to face adaptive challenges. Leadership also requires moral courage, as when actions are taken for moral reasons in spite of the risk of adverse consequences and in the face of one's fears or doubts. Like leadership, moral courage requires both the will and skill and involves deliberation or careful thought, not just rashness. In the case of leadership with authority, the willingness to exceed one's scope of authority and articulate the adaptive challenge when followers want easy, technical solutions is a great example of moral courage. When people decide to exercise leadership without authority, moral courage becomes an even more important motivator to speak up and take necessary, often risky action. When the fear to overcome is neither physical nor social, but stems from one's own irrational worries and anxieties, psychological courage is needed. Leaders are human and have their own hungers and desires. For example, leaders have the need for some power and control, affirmation, and importance as well as intimacy and delight (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). It takes psychological courage to recognize and manage these needs. It also takes psychological courage to deeply understand and accept one's loyalties to both past habits and to people, especially when adaptive changes require abandoning or modifying some of these loyalties. From the above, it is obvious how all three forms of courage are deeply linked to exercising leadership.

Third, leadership literature has debated whether leadership is a trait or an activity that can be learned and undertaken by anyone. This same debate also pertains to courage and whether courage is a trait that some people have and others do not, or is it a virtue that can be learned by anyone who chooses to take on the associated risks. There is support for the notion that courage is not merely a personality trait, but rather encompasses actions that any individual can undertake to achieve a moral goal or objective (e.g., Rachman, 1990). In this sense, courage is like leadership—it can be both learned or taught and also can be chosen as of way of thinking and acting by anyone who makes it a choice.

Summary and Conclusion

Human emotions have been the subject of intense research during the last few decades and arguably fear is one of the most studied emotions (LeDoux, 2014). In recent years, there has been increased focus on the study of emotions within organizations. In spite of this increased focus on emotions within organization and on human fear, there are scant empirical studies of discrete emotions within organizations, such as (or specifically) fear and fear-related emotions within the leader available (Gooty et al., 2009; Turner & Mavin, 2008). Therefore the purpose of this study was to address existing gaps in the research of leaders' fear-related emotions.

I began this review of literature chapter by discussing prior research on emotions to provide a logical argument for studying fear, anxiety and worry within organizations as a theme or cluster of fear-related emotions. The literature review also established an understanding of fear-related emotions from both a psychological and biological perspectives. The relevant theories and models were next highlighted to establish a conceptual framework (see Figure 2.3) for this study. The organizational external and internal context or environment, the leadership process, and personality or dispositions of leaders were posited as stimuli of leaders' fear-related emotions.

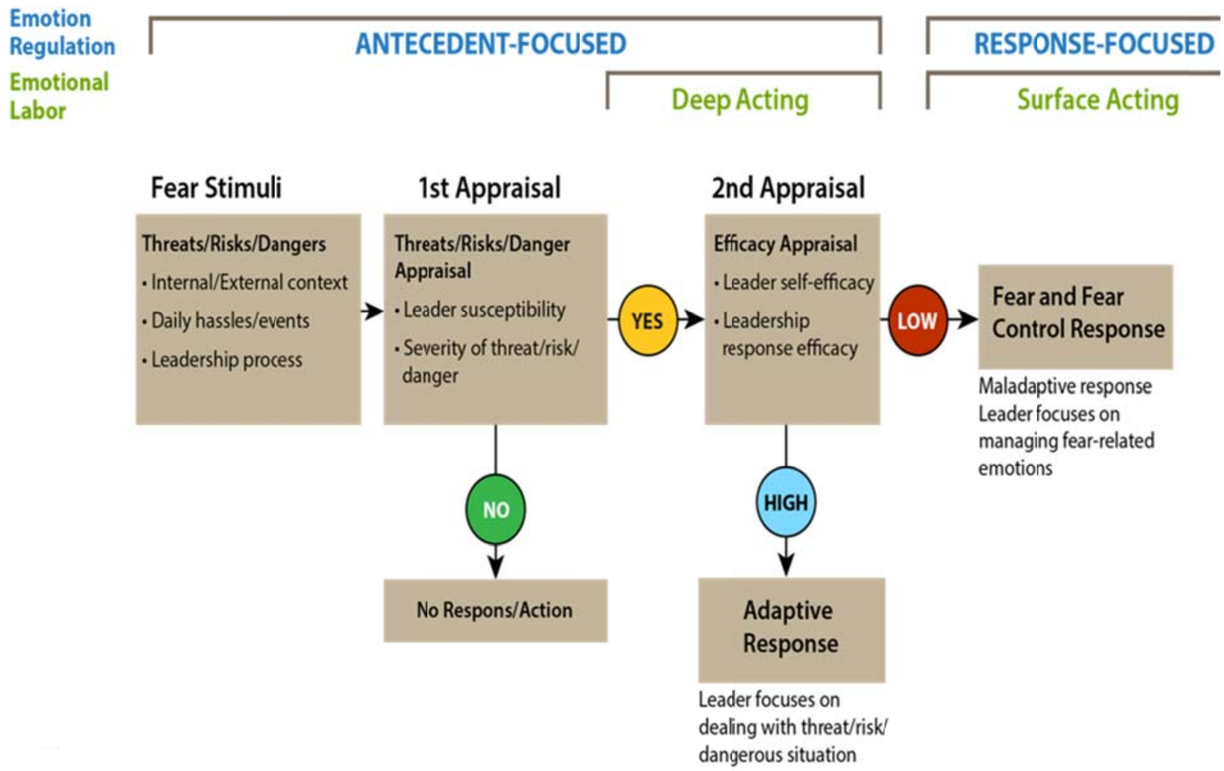

Figure 2.3. Conceptual model of fear response (adapted fromWitte, 1992; Gross, 1998; Grandey, 2000).

Using Ashkanasy's (2003) five levels of analysis in emotion research within organization to understand leaders' emotional experience, a number of research articles on emotions within the leader, emotional differences between leaders and interaction between leaders and followers were reviewed. For example, Turner and Mavin (2008) called leader fear-related emotion "strutting and fretting" and concluded that leaders often mask these feelings from their followers. Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2004) referred to the emotions of school leaders when dealing with crises or critical events as the "wounding" of the leader.

Fear and fear-related emotions are often mentioned as the central theme of these leaders' dealing with crisis, threats and risk. A study of school leaders in Ireland was conducted by O'Connor (2006) to better understand the inner feelings of these leaders and how emotions impacted their well-being. These studies show that the practice of leadership does exert emotional pressure on leaders including fear and fear-related emotions. Leaders often mask these feelings at the expense of being authentic about how they feel. Leaders also experience stress which negatively impacts their health. Fear, as one of five psychological attributes of the CEO leader, has also been linked to dysfunction of corporate boards and ultimately to the downfall of businesses (Barnard, 2008). Fear influences a leader's decisions and risk-taking and leads to more conservative and careful decisions (Delgado-Garcia & De La Fuente-Sabaté, 2010). A close cousin to fear, worry, is also part of a leader's fear-related emotions. Worriers believe that worrying can prevent negative outcomes (Freeston et al., 1994).

Based on AET, it is easy to see that leader traits or personality can affect how a leader experiences fear-related emotions. The effect of leader traits on how leaders experience fear and fear-related emotions differently was supported by several research articles (Barnard, 2008; Delgado-Garcia & De La Fuente-Sabaté, 2010; Freeston et al., 1994; Judge et al., 2009; Staw & Barsade, 1993). The research asserts that the genetic makeup of a person is one factor that influences how they emotionally experience different events.

The view that leaders differ in how they manage their own emotions and of their followers is also supported by the emotional intelligence (EI) concept (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). However, EI can be learned by leaders over time.

The management of fear-related emotions as a part of risk-taking and decision-making was explored. Leaders experiencing fear-related emotions are likely to express pessimistic risk estimates and risk adverse choices (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). However, affect did not have a direct influence on leader's likelihood of seeking risk (Williams & Voon, 1999; Williams et al., 2003).

Leaders use emotional labor to influence their followers by surface acting, deep acting, or displaying genuine emotions (Gardner et al., 2009; Humphrey et al., 2008). Based on the research cited regarding the experience of fear within the leader, it is easy to conclude that when it comes to the emotion of fear, most leaders use surface acting and mask their feelings (Bunker, 1997). Most leaders have admitted to faking (94.8%) or masking (97.0%) their emotions such as fear, anxiety, and worry in interactions with their followers (Glasø & Einarsen, 2008). This masking can be stressful on the leader and result in negative impacts to their health and well-being (Humphrey et al., 2008). CEOs are worried about their health and the impact of leadership stress on their lives (Sutherland & Cooper, 1995).

Given the enormous adaptive challenges many people are facing from the uncertainty of the future and the acceleration of the pace of change, never mind the global adaptive challenges from climate change, resource deficiencies, terrorism, global economic instability and the like, it is reasonable to for leaders to experience fear-related emotions. It is also obvious that courage is more necessary to make progress in the face of fear today than ever before.

I believe that President Theodore Roosevelt's speech "Citizenship in a Republic" in Paris, France, on April 23, 1910, is a good reminder of the need for the courage to take action in the face of risk

> It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat. (LeadershipNow, n.d., para. 9)

As someone who practices leadership, I use this speech as inspiration when I need to take action in spite of the risks and fear of failure. President Roosevelt frames his argument for having the courage to take action by not only venerating “the triumph of high achievement,” but also by bestowing nobility on failure. President Roosevelt reminds us that leadership, like living, is not just about winning or losing or being right or wrong, it is about courage.

Methodology

Organizational leaders' ability to respond emotionally to threatening, risky, and/or dangerous stimuli in today's external and internal environment is one key to the success of the leadership process (George, 2000). Leaders' emotional experiences and responses to these stimuli can greatly influence their perceptual faculties, facilitate or hinder action and decision-making, foster or impede relationships with followers, and may have positive or negative impacts on a leader's psychological and physiological well-being. One of the most common and often normal emotional reactions to threatening, risky and dangerous stimuli is defensive or protective responses and fear-related emotions (LeDoux, 1996).

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore and better understand leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. In addition to understanding the overall experience, the study focused on how leaders manage their fear-related emotions and the role of courage, on the influence of fear-related emotions on leader-follower relationships, on leader decision-making, and on leader health and well-being.

This chapter describes the study's research methodology and the rationale for using qualitative research design, in general, and specifically the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). I present the CIT including its roots, evolution, and advantages and limitations. Examples of the CIT uses in the study of leadership and/or emotions are given. Finally, the chapter concludes by focusing on how the CIT was used in this study, including a detailed description of each research step.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

The use of qualitative research methods in the study of leadership has been on the rise especially since the 1990s (Bryman, 2004). This relatively late surge in the use of qualitative methods to study leadership is attributed by Bryman (2004) to "leadership research [being] a methodologically conservative field that is slow to innovate, perhaps because it is oriented to practitioners who are likely to be (or are perceived as more likely to be) persuaded by apparent scientific rigor" (p. 749). In spite of the relatively late start, qualitative research has been a very useful addition to the study of leadership. One of the advantages of the qualitative method is its ability to account for contextual variables that are grounded in people's experience and hence are more accessible to the practitioners of leadership (Bryman, Stephens, & à Campo 1996). Conger (1998) also asserts that qualitative methods must play an important role in leadership studies because leadership is a rich and complex phenomenon. It is well argued that leadership is not a simple reflection of objective reality, but is a socially constructed process that can be produced and reproduced over time (Chen & Meindl, 1991; Conger, 1998) and qualitative research methods tend to take the socially constructed reality of leadership more seriously than quantitative methods (Alvesson, 1996). Indeed, some researchers would strongly argue that qualitative methods are the most appropriate ones for a contextual topic such as leadership (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Conger, 1998).

As stated above, the focus of this study was leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. Given the nature of the research questions to be studied, a qualitative approach to the collection and analysis of data about leader experiences was the most appropriate. Ospina (2004) provides seven reasons for justifying the use of qualitative methods in leadership studies. This study met three of the seven reasons. Mainly this study: (a) endeavored to understand this social and emotional phenomenon from the perspective of the participants rather than explaining it from the outside, (b) aimed to create a better understanding of this complex phenomenon which is difficult or nearly impossible to approach or capture quantitatively, and (c) focused on understanding a phenomenon that has been dismissed by mainstream research due to its difficulties to study. According to Ospina, researchers who use reasons like these are inclined toward a postmodernist view and see qualitative research as an approach to inquiry that stands on its own and best allows a researcher to attain ‘a glimpse of the world.’

For this qualitative study, I used the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) due to the method’s ability to capture both emotional and behavioral experiences. The CIT enabled me to use an inductive approach where I allowed the participants’ stories and the data collected from the interviews to speak for themselves. Next, I describe the CIT method and how it has been used in the study of leadership.

The Roots of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT)

According to Flanagan (1954) the roots of CIT can be traced back to studies by Sir Francis Galton during the nineteenth century; however, it was Flanagan and colleagues who formally developed the CIT as it is known today. About sixty years ago, Flanagan wrote a seminal article describing the CIT development and its fundamental principles. In essence, the CIT has been used for scientific study for over half a century. According to Chell (2004), “The significance of this time span is that then the assumption of a positivist approach to social science investigations was largely unquestioned” (p. 45).

CIT was an outgrowth of studies in the Aviation Psychology Program of the US Army Air Force (USAAF) during World War II. The program was developed in 1941 and devised procedures for the selection and classification of aircrews. The first study reported on the failure to learn to fly. The pilot instructors and check pilots reported their reasons for eliminating a given pilot. Many reasons were clichés and stereotypes. A number of specific observations about behavior were reported. According to Flanagan (1954), this study provided the basis for a research program on selecting pilots. The second study emphasized factual reports on performance made by qualified observers. In 1943–1944, reasons for the failure of bombing missions were collected. In the summer of 1944, a number of studies were conducted on combat leadership in the US Air Force. This was the first large scale systematic effort to gather specific incidents of both effective and ineffective behavior within a designated activity. Combat veterans reported incidents observed by them that were either helpful or inadequate in accomplishing the mission. Questions such as “describe the officer’s actions, what did he do?” were asked. The incidents were then analyzed for effective combat leadership. Another study was conducted to survey disorientation while flying. Disorientation was meant to be any experience denoting uncertainty as to one’s spatial position in relation to the vertical. Pilots returning from combat were asked, “think of some occasion during combat flying in which you personally experienced acute disorientation or strong vertigo.” Then were asked, “Describe what you saw, heard, or felt that brought on the experience.” In 1946, another study was conducted about flying with instruments, landing, and using controls.

When World War II concluded, some of the psychologists working in the USAAF Aviation Psychology Program, including Flanagan, established the American Institute for Research and followed the general principles developed in the Aviation Psychology Program to systematically study human behavior (Flanagan, 1954). This is where the Critical Incident Technique was formally developed. The first two studies conducted by the Institute in 1947 studied the critical requirements of an officer in the US Air Force and the critical requirements of commercial pilots. A third study by the Institute researched the critical requirements for research personnel in physical science and their effective performance. These studies were conducted by trained psychologists who acted as observers of the participants and reported their observations.

It is important to note that self-reports by participants were not used in the early development of the CIT.

According to Flanagan (1954), the first time observations or interviews were conducted by people who were not trained or were not actual psychologists was during a study in 1948 to analyze the air traffic controller's job. In 1949, a study was done to determine the critical job requirements for hourly wage employees at General Motors. This was the first time CIT was used in an industrial setting. In these studies, CIT was used to study both attitude and aptitude.

Flanagan (1954) also worked with graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh on a number of research studies using CIT that contributed to the advancement of the CIT. One example includes the critical requirements of dentists wherein critical incidents were gathered from patients, dentists, and dental school instructors. The results were used to create selection tests for the School of Dentistry. Another example was a study of the critical requirements of industrial foremen at the Westinghouse Electrical Corporation wherein critical incidents were obtained from foremen, general foremen, and general staff and the results were used to prepare performance evaluations for foremen and supervisors. Other examples determined the critical requirements for bookkeepers, insurance agency heads, and general psychology course instructors.

For a detailed review of the ways in which CIT has been used to study performance, training and proficiency, selection and classification of personnel in several occupations, designing job requirements, creating operating procedures, designing equipment, motivation and leadership attitudes, and counseling and psychology see Flanagan (1954). It is important to note that the CIT in its earlier years was primarily used as a tool to create a functional description of an activity.

The CIT Procedure as Developed by Flanagan

CIT is a procedure for collecting or gathering certain important facts concerning behavior in defined situations (Flanagan, 1954). Flanagan adds that CIT does not consist of a single rigid set of rules governing data collection. It is a flexible set of principles that must be adapted to meet the specific situation at hand. For Flanagan, only simple types of judgments are required by the observer, and only reports from qualified observers are reported or included. All reports, once completed by the observers, are evaluated by the same observer in terms of an agreed upon statement of the purpose of the activities. Flanagan defined objectivity in terms of a number of independent observers making the same report.

According to Flanagan (1954), the accuracy and objectivity of the judgment depends on the precision with which the characteristic has been defined and the competence of the observer in interpreting this definition with relation to the incident observed. This assertion by Flanagan cannot be taken for granted nor generalized to all research methods because there are other cognitive and situational factors that can affect research accuracy and objectivity of judgment.

Flanagan (1954) specifically mentioned two instances when subjective factors can be introduced due to what Flanagan referred to, at the time of his writing, as “current deficiencies in psychological knowledge” (p. 335). He also asserts that two other steps are necessary when objectivity has not been achieved. The first step involves the classification of the critical incidents. An inductive process that is relatively subjective is often used when an adequate theory of human behavior addressing the behavior being studied has not been established. Once a classification system has been established, objectivity can be established in placing the incidents in the established categories. The second step according to Flanagan “refers to inferences regarding practical procedures for improving performance based on the observed incidents”

(p. 335). Again he cites the lack of psychological knowledge at the time for the inability to determine or predict with high certainty the effect of a given interference (i.e., training, specific selection, or operating procedure) on future behaviors similar to the one being observed. In this situation the incidents should be studied and hypotheses formulated based on the “established principles of human behavior” and also based on the specifics of the situation being studied.

There are five main steps in the CIT procedure as developed by Flanagan:

1. Determination of the general aim or activity
2. Development of specific plan for collecting critical incidents
3. Collection of data according to the specified procedure
4. Data analysis and classification
5. Interpretation and reporting

The Evolution of the CIT Since Flanagan

According to Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio (2005), the CIT has seen four major departures from the way Flanagan (1954) described the method.

First, the CIT has been used beyond behavioral studies to the study of psychological states and/or actual emotional experiences. This change was initiated when Eilber (1953) studied emotional immaturity using CIT and later when Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959) used CIT to study motivation at work. Flanagan (1982) himself used CIT to study the quality of life in America. This was a very relevant extension of CIT since I used CIT to study the emotional experiences of leaders. Butterfield et al. (2005) list a number of other studies where CIT was used beyond the study of specific behaviors.

Second is a shift from the use of and emphasis on direct observation to retrospective self-reports. Flanagan’s (1954) article was almost entirely written with the idea that trained observers or experts collected observations of subject behaviors. Although Flanagan did not rule out the use of self-reports, none of his earlier studies utilized self-reports. According to Butterfield et al. (2005) virtually all the CIT studies since 1978 that they reviewed used retrospective self-reports.

Third is the way the CIT data are analyzed. Flanagan (1954) outlined three major steps for analyzing CIT data. The steps began with the selection of the general frame of reference for describing the critical incidents. The next step entailed the formulation of major categories for use in classifying the incidents. The classification procedure was more subjective than objective and at the time of Flanagan's work there were no simple rules used in establishing categories, which meant the quality and usability of the research was largely dependent on the skills of the researcher (Flanagan, 1954). The last step in Flanagan's data analysis process was the determination of levels along the specificity-generality continuum for use in reporting the data. In Butterfield et al. (2005) some studies followed Flanagan's steps, others did not. Some included a description of their analysis methods and others mixed and matched one or more traditions. This is consistent with my own findings when I searched for leadership and/or emotions studies using the CIT.

A fourth difference is the way in which the credibility and trustworthiness of the CIT findings is established. This is very important given how qualitative research has been viewed in leadership and organizational studies coupled with the need to convince practitioners of the validity of its findings (Bryman, 2004). When Butterfield et al. (2005) conducted their 50-year review of CIT, they found a wide range from no credibility checks cited to a number of checks employed, either alone or in combination.

To provide better clarity, Butterflied et al. (2005) offered a number of credibility checks based on their research using CIT at the University of British Columbia. The first check is arranging for independent extraction of critical incidents by a person who is very familiar with the CIT. This person independently extracts approximately 25% of the critical incidents from the taped interviews. This check is typically looking for the level of agreement between critical incidents cited by both the researcher and the independent checker.

Second is conducting a participant cross-check where a second interview with the participants is conducted after the data from the first interview have been analyzed and put into tentative categories. The purpose of this check is for the researcher to confirm with the participants that the tentative categories adequately represent their experiences.

Third is to ask an independent judge to place 25% of the incidents that are randomly selected into the categories that have been tentatively selected by the researcher. This is done to determine the level of agreement between the judge and the researcher.

Fourth is the achievement of exhaustiveness or redundancy by tracking the point at which new categories stop emerging from the data. This is also referred to as the saturation point.

Fifth is conducting expert checks by submitting the tentative categories to two or more experts in the field of study. The experts typically comment on the usefulness and whether they are surprised by any missing tentative categories. Higher agreement on this check is interpreted as higher credibility.

Sixth is performing calculations of participant rates that cite a specific incident by dividing the number of participants who cited a specific incident by the total number of participants. Generally speaking, a rate of 25% for a given category is considered to validate it (Borgen & Amundson, 1984).

Seventh is establishing theoretical agreement by scrutinizing the support for the assumptions of research using relevant scholarly literature and also by comparing researcher established categories to the scholarly literature to see if they are adequately supported. Obviously the purpose of this check is to establish theoretical support for the research. One caution Butterfield et al. (2005) make is that the lack of support does not always mean that the research categories are invalid. Given the exploratory nature of CIT, it may mean that the researcher has uncovered something new. The point is that if support is lacking a careful decision has to be made.

For the eighth check, Butterfield et al. (2005) cites the concept of descriptive validity in qualitative research (Maxwell, 1992). This concept refers to the accuracy of the researcher's account of what was said by the research subjects. In today's research, it has become very common to record the interviews and to prepare actual transcripts to accurately reflect the research participants' voices and words.

For the final check, Butterfield et al. (2005) asked the researchers at University of British Columbia to ask an expert in the CIT to listen to sample interview tapes to ensure that the researcher is following the CIT method.

Examples of the Use of CIT in Leadership and/or Emotions Studies

I have selected five studies based on their relevance to my research questions and interests, which used CIT to describe leaders' emotional experiences in greater detail. It is important to note that regardless of research method, there are scant empirical studies of leaders' emotional experiences specifically with fear-related emotions and courage. I mainly focused on the methodology rather than the contents of the study. To that end, I summarized the research question(s), the data collection and analysis method(s).

In the first study, Dasborough (2006) used the CIT method to study how leader behaviors were the source of positive or negative employee emotional response. Dasborough had three research questions. First, what leader behaviors evoke positive emotions and negative emotions in their employees? Second, when employees recall emotional interactions with their leaders, what is the nature of the intensity of employee emotional responses? Third, what emotion words do employees use when describing interactions with their leaders?

Research data were collected using interviews with 10 individual leaders (n = 10) and 9 mini focus groups (n = 9) made up of 2–3 employees, and a total of 24 employees (n = 24) who reported to these leaders. The data were analyzed using a thematic analysis for the initial description of the emotional process of leadership and a content analysis to compare leader behaviors to employee emotional responses.

In the second study, Clarke (2009) used CIT to research how emotions can influence project manager behaviors and decisions as they perform their project management roles. Specific research questions included: how does emotional awareness influence project managers' decisions and behaviors? How does an awareness of emotions by project managers influence the nature and quality of relationships within projects?

Semi-structured interviews using the CIT method were conducted with 15 willing project managers randomly selected from attendees of emotional intelligence (EI) training. The interviews were conducted six months following the EI training.

The first phase of the analysis included reading all the transcripts and coding the data by identifying and categorizing data that captured aspects of project manager emotional awareness. The initial result was a series of matrices that enabled the reduction and analysis of the data through diagrammatic display. In the second phase, the researcher reread the typed transcripts several times to see if any emotional state categories or fields were missed. Any missing information was added. From there the researcher proceeded to further reduce the data by identifying all common issues or themes among field categories and reducing these to broader constructs, i.e. decision-making, problem-solving, communications, and conflict management.

In his theoretical or conceptual paper, Pescosolido (2002) proposed the idea of leadership as the management of the group's emotions. He focused his study on emergent or informal leaders. These are people who exercise leadership without formal authority. He used CIT to study several examples of group emotional management and developed his concept based on these observations.

Field observations of 20 groups were conducted, followed by CIT interviews with each of the 20 groups. Pescosolido (2002) used a theoretical sampling procedure based on Strauss and Corbin (1995) to select two types of groups he had access to. The two groups were semi-professional jazz music groups and collegiate rowing crews. Going into the observations, the author assumed that both groups experience intense emotional situations.

First, Pescosolido (2002) observed both groups for at least one complete practice or performance session that lasted between two and four hours. The author documented his observations noting which members took initiative, which was respected by the group, and how the group expressed emotions.

Both groups were interviewed afterwards for 45 to 90 minutes and were asked to describe a recent critical incident within the group context, which happened in the last six months. Members were asked to describe in detail an incident where they felt the group clicked. 70% of the groups focused on sessions that were observed by the interviewer.

Interview transcripts and field observation notes were analyzed to identify examples of emergent group leaders acting as the manager of the group emotion. Due to the conceptual nature of the paper, the examples served as illustrations of the concepts put forward by the author. The author utilized content analysis and shared some quantitative conclusions. For example, 60% of the total sample observed incidents where emergent leaders interpreted an ambiguous situation. This research illustrates how CIT can be used to establish and validate theories and concepts.

In another study, H. W. Williams (2008) focused on the competencies that distinguish outstanding from typical urban school principals. The author used models for emotional and social intelligence along with the ability to adapt to the external environment in her comparative analysis. Specifically, the article addressed two research questions. First, what are the emotional and social intelligence competencies that distinguish outstanding from typical urban principals? Second, how do outstanding and typical urban principals conceptualize and adapt differently to their external organizational environment?

The research study used a criterion sample design and involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The study used a sample of 20 principals from a large Midwestern urban school district (11 in elementary schools, 5 in middle schools, and 4 in high schools). The sample was drawn from a population size of 120 principals. There were 12 outstanding principals and 8 typical ones with a minimum of three years of experience. Data were collected from the critical incident interviews for both the emotional and social intelligence competencies and the adaptation to the external environment. H. W. Williams (2008) refers to this as behavioral event incident interviews (BEI). The interviewer asked the principals to describe in detail their real job experience. Each interview lasted two hours where each principal was asked to describe three work incidents, two in which the principal felt they were effective and one in which the principal felt ineffective. The interviewer encouraged each principal to share in detail what they felt, said, thought, and did during each incident. In addition, each principal was asked to complete two written questionnaires, a Career History and Rotter Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966).

Each incident was analyzed using a code derived from a model of social and emotional intelligence competencies that is well documented in validity and reliability. The interviews were coded and the total number of incidents in which a competency was coded became the principal's frequency score for that competency with 3.0 as the highest score indicating the competency was coded in all three incidents. The lowest score was "0" which indicated that a competency was not coded in any of the three incidents. From there, the data were analyzed for each performance group at competency and cluster levels.

To examine the differences in the demonstration of emotional and social intelligence between the two principal groups, H. W. Williams (2008) used Chi-Square analysis and specifically analyzed the distribution or consistency of each of the competencies across the three incidents. A two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-test was run for each competency treating the frequency score as the dependent variable (intensity).

The incidents were also analyzed for principals' conceptualization and adaptation to the external environment. Two variables were analyzed. The first was how often the principals mentioned items identified in the literature (i.e. school district bureaucracy, community partners, parents, and families) as part his or her external environment. Frequency scores were calculated for both groups. Two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-tests were run treating the frequency scores as the dependent variable. The second variable was the frequency of incidents in which four boundaries spanning strategies developed by the author was mentioned. Two-tailed Mann-Whitney U-tests were also run treating the frequency score of each boundary spanning strategy as the dependent variable.

Bell and Song (2005) explored the role of emotions such as shame, guilt, embarrassment, sympathy, respect, fear, and anxiety in the conflict process within the workplace. The research used four emotion clusters. The four types were hostility (self-focused approach), self-conscious emotions (self-focused avoid), relational positivity (other-focused approach) and fear (other-focused avoid). At the same time, the study proposed two cognitive antecedents of emotion and choice of conflict resolution strategy. These were self and other-blame and self and other-concern.

The study used part-time MBA students (n = 143) with 47 men and 96 women with an average age of 29.9 years. The researchers targeted part-time MBA students because they felt the likelihood of them being employed was higher which meant the chance that they had experienced a recent workplace conflict was also higher. The MBA students came from different types of organizations such as marketing and sales, financial services, management consulting, and computer and technical services. Some of the participants (n = 69) managed other employees and on average had 13 subordinates. The participants also came from different cultures, that is, India, China, North America, and Europe.

A written survey based on CIT was distributed to the participants and was completed by them outside the class and returned to the researchers. There were three sections to the survey. In the first section, students were asked to describe in detail a recent conflict incident at work where they felt emotionally engaged. In the second part, students were asked to rate the degree to which they experienced emotion and what conflict resolution strategies they used. In the third section, students were asked to answer demographic questions, as well as questions about their work and their organization.

In addition to the qualitative descriptions of the conflict incident, categorical variables and demographics, the CIT was used as part of a mixed method design where participants were also asked to use a 5-point Likert scale to assess attributions of blame, concerns for own and other's interests, the central issue of the conflict, the status of the other party, emotions experienced during the conflict process, and the conflict resolution strategies.

Advantages and Limitations of the Critical Incident Technique

The Critical Incident Technique offered a number of benefits. First, the CIT encouraged interviewees to tell their own story from their own perspective using their own words. They decided which incidents are most critical or most memorable within the context of the questions being asked or the phenomenon being studied. With CIT, the researcher(s) does not have a preconception of what will be important and worth sharing by the interviewees (Chell, 1998). In that regard, the CIT reflects the normal way participants feel in a given circumstance or context and are not forced to recall any specific emotion or emotional state.

Second, often times the stories and event descriptions being shared by the participants are emotionally rich with specifics and details that are very helpful to the study of emotional experiences. Emotions are temporal and dynamic, which necessitates that emotion studies incorporate research designs capable of addressing the transient nature of emotions. The CIT is capable of accommodating the emotional experience because it can be designed to study emotions very close to their occurrence thus reducing the probability of retrospective biases (Robinson & Clore, 2002a). Additionally, one of the key advantages and distinguishing features of the CIT is that it represents an operant (studying behavior that people spontaneously exhibit), not respondent (asking participants to respond to research stimuli such as Likert Scale), way of interviewing participants (Ryan, Emmerling, & Spencer, 2009). This enables the CIT to assess participants' spontaneous emotions and behaviors rather than responding to stimuli such as rating scales. Citing McClelland (1998), Ryan et al. assert that operant measures of motives and competencies have shown to be more predictive of what people will actually do than what they say they will do when asked to respond to a rating scale or test item. In the case of fear and fear-related emotions, emotionally negative incidents can be defined as extreme incidents, especially in the presence of physical or psychological threats. As such, there is an advantage to the CIT since ‘‘extreme’’ incidents can be more accurately recalled than those that are more mundane (Flanagan, 1954).

Third, CIT research is inductive (Edvardsson, 1992). Given that there is scant research on leaders' emotional experiences, and specifically fear-related emotions, the CIT was very well-suited to address this research gap. According to Grove and Fisk (1997), the CIT method is especially useful when the topic being researched has been sparingly documented. Also as Flanagan (1954) mentioned, the CIT is effective as an exploratory method to increase knowledge about a little-known phenomenon. Additionally, the CIT is very appropriate when a thorough understanding is needed to describe or explain a phenomenon (Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault, 1990). CIT can be particularly effective when used in developing the conceptual structure (i.e., hypotheses) to be used and tested in subsequent research (Walker & Truly, 1992). The CIT method does not consist of a rigid set of principles to follow, but can be thought of as having a rather flexible set of rules that can be modified to meet the requirements of the topic being studied (Burns, Williams, & Maxham, 2000; Hopkinson & Hogarth-Scott, 2001; Neuhaus, 1996). The CIT method is effective in studying phenomena for which it is hard to specify all variables a priori (de Ruyter, Kasper, & Wetzels, 1995). In summary, the CIT is an inductive method; patterns are formed as they emerge from the responses thereby allowing the researcher to generate concepts and theories (Olsen & Thomasson, 1992). This strength was particularly useful to this study of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions because one of the goals of the study was to offer inductive concepts or models for future use by both practitioners and researchers.

Fourth, unlike surveys or rating scales, the CIT provides the researcher with stories and explanations that are longer, more detailed, and deeper. This is because the CIT reflects the context or is often conducted in a natural setting with the focus on the participant and their perspective. Additionally, the presence of a skilled interviewer limits the participant's ability to hide behind general or vague answers and allows the interviewer to probe further. Finally, the CIT is a method where the participant is aware of being interviewed (Chell, 1998); thus the CIT can be less threatening to complete than asking participants to respond to surveys or rating scales. Interviewees can be given assurances of confidentiality and anonymity in person, which often makes them feel safer and more relaxed (Chell, 1998). For this study, it was important to establish emotional safety to facilitate participants' willingness to tell their stories.

The CIT also has a number of limitations. The first relates to the process of coming up with categories in the data analysis phase, which can be one of the most controversial parts of the CIT and has been criticized for being a difficult and subjective process (Polit & Hungler, 1995).

The second limitation specifically relates to leadership studies. Dasborough (2006) states "The study of leadership is highly prone to presentational data" (p. 176). This could lead to employees feeling pressure to tell a better story about their bosses or leaders out of fear of retaliation and therefore a need to protect themselves. Leaders may want, on the other hand, to enhance their image through impression management and therefore tell a better or more positive story (Dasborough, 2006). Given that social norms often do not encourage leaders or CEOs to share their emotions, especially fear-related emotions, some participants in this study engaged in image or impression management. Whenever I suspected that any of the research participants was engaged in image enhancement, I demonstrated my own vulnerability by speaking to my own weaknesses.

The third limitation relates to qualitative data. Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data using any method can be highly subjective, which in turn can enhance researcher biases. This can be managed by introducing reliability and trustworthiness checks.

Fourth, when Flanagan (1954) and colleagues initially came up with the CIT, qualified observers or subject matter experts were required to observe critical incidents and report on them. While the requirement for an observer has changed and today participants are often interviewed rather than observed, there are still certain fields of research that require an interviewer with an in-depth knowledge of the field to both conduct and analyze the CIT interviews. For example, emotion research may require a skilled interviewer not only to conduct and analyze the data, but also to manage participants' emotions if they become highly emotional when recalling emotionally difficult incidents.

Finally, one of the disadvantages of the CIT relates to problems of retrospection and introspection. The CIT method has been criticized as having a design that may be flawed by recall bias (Michel, 2001). This problem can be limited when reported incidents are recent and the participants are motivated to engage in detailed observations and assessment during or shortly after the occurrence of the incidents.

Implications to This Study of Leaders' Experiences With Fear-Related Emotions and Courage

My study of leaders' fear-related emotions was strictly qualitative research using the CIT. In this section I outline how I used the CIT in the study of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. To this end, I used Flanagan's (1954) five CIT steps to outline the specific implications to my study. These five steps, in order, are: the general aim, plan and specifications, data collection, data analysis, and interpreting and reporting the data.

The general aim of my study was to better understand how leaders experience fear-related emotions. Specifically, my study explored how fear-related emotions influence leaders' decision-making, relationships, and well-being. The broader objective of the study was to assess the impact of fear-related emotions on people's ability to exercise leadership. This is especially important if we look at leadership not as a role, but as an activity that anyone can choose to perform in the face of an important collective challenge and/or to achieve a collective noble purpose (Heifetz, 1994).

According to Flanagan (1954), the next step in the CIT process is to make the plans and specifications of the research explicit to the observers. Flanagan indicated that the following specifications must be established and made explicit prior to data collection: the situation being observed, the relevance to the general aim, the extent of effect on the general aim, and the person(s) making the observation. It is important to note that Flanagan's initial conception of the CIT used only qualified observers who observed and reported on behaviors of the research subjects. In my research, I conducted interviews with interviewees who self-reported their stories or an incident which made the applicability of this step different from what Flanagan originally intended. Nevertheless, below I address each of the four specifications and how each was addressed in this study:

1. The situation being observed: I asked interviewees to share an incident or situation in a leadership context wherein they perceived the incident as threatening, risky, and/or dangerous. I allowed each interviewee to share their own experience and tell their story in as much detail as possible. I selected research participants who exercise or exercised leadership from an executive role in their respective organizations, with specific focus on the stories of chief executive officers (CEOs). In summary, the situations or incidents I probed for were ones where a leader experienced or perceived a threat, danger or risk within their organizational leadership activities and as a result the leader may have experienced fear-related emotions.
2. Relevance to the general aim: The situations or incidents were very relevant to my research's general aim. They focused on the understanding of fear-related emotions of organizational leaders.
3. Extent of effect on the general aim: The incidents or situations I studied made significant contributions to the understanding of leaders' experience with fear-related emotions.
4. Person(s) to make observation: Rather than observing the direct behavior of my subjects, I conducted the interviews. I have been studying fear-related emotions over the last couple of years as part of my doctoral studies in leadership and change and I am a CEO who has reflected deeply on the nature of fear-related emotions in leaders—in my own practice as well as that of others. Coupled with the assistance and guidance of my advisor and dissertation committee, I was qualified to conduct this research.

The next step was data collection. One of the conditions that Flanagan (1954) stressed for data collection is that the incidents are still fresh in the interviewee's mind. This is important for the accuracy of the information being reported and to limit problems with retrospection, introspection, and to limit recall bias. I asked the interviewees to limit the recalled incidents to the past 6–12 months from the time of the interviews. I watched for any vagueness in the reporting of the incidents and probed further to help the interviewees remember as much detail as possible. Vague incidents were not used in the final research. It is important to note that some of the participants chose to share incidents that happened more than a year ago. These incidents were shared with a great level of detail and without vagueness and therefore were used in this study.

I used semi-structured interviews as the primary method for data collection. I interviewed 15 participants (CEOs). I allowed saturation to dictate the final number of interviews. I ensured complete confidentiality of the collected data and let all research participants know up-front how the data would be handled in order for them to feel confident about the confidentiality of the data, especially given the sensitive nature of my study.

I recruited research participants from my own network. One of the advantages I had was my current role as the chairman and CEO of a well-known engineering company in the United States of America (USA) allowed me access to more than a few hundred CEOs, especially in the engineering and construction industry. I capitalized on this privilege and utilized this network to recruit 15 CEOs as research participants. I made a short list of 20–30 CEOs whom I knew or were familiar with and reached out to each of them by phone or email (see Appendix B). Varying organization sizes, different genders, and different industries were targeted. These selection criteria were hoped to aide in the reader's generalization of the research findings.

When I contacted the potential research participants, I shared with each of them the purpose of the study and the nature of their participation. All participants were assured of confidentiality with respect to data collection and data analysis. I scheduled an appointment to interview each willing participant at a time, place and with a method (-in-person, video call, or phone call as the least preferred method) that was convenient for them. As mentioned earlier, I provided each of the participants with an orientation to the study, shared its general aim, answered any questions and then asked each participant to sign the consent form. Next, I proceeded with the interviews and tape-recorded each of them. One participant expressed apprehension about the interview and was encouraged to decline if he was uncomfortable speaking about the research topic. He eventually decided not to participate and another participant replaced him.

Two of the study interviews were conducted face-to-face and the rest were conducted via the telephone. On average the interviews took about one hour with the shortest interview lasting about fifty minutes and the longest one last about one hour and twenty minutes. There was an attempt to use video calls via Skype, but it was not successful and the phone was used instead.

Flanagan (1954) asserted that the interview questions are the most important part of data collection and cautioned that a slight change in wording may produce a big change in the incidents reported. As Flanagan suggested, I conducted a pilot study (see Exhibit 1 for the pilot interview protocol) to try out the proposed research questions with a small number of interviewees and to gather feedback about the interview questions as well as the method. For the pilot study, I recruited four participants and conducted interviews with them via Skype (2), by telephone (1), and in-person (1). The participants shared many of their fears such as the fear of death or harm, fear of being seen as weak or incapable, fear of showing true feelings, fear of losing job security, fear of losing self-worth or losing influence on others, fear of losing power, fear of being incompetent, fear of the unknown, fear losing one's identity and fear of losing connections with others or being liked. In addition several common themes emerged from the pilot interviews.

In all four interviews, self-confidence or self-efficacy came up as a big influencing factor in how these leaders dealt with the threatening or risky situation. When the threatening situation was very complex, it seemed their confidence (efficacy) was not strong enough to help the interviewees overcome their fear-related emotions. All four interviewees spent the initial time dealing with the management of their fears rather than with the situation that caused the fear. In essence, their fear emotions created a maladaptive response initially, even in the case of SARS where the leader spent a few moments contemplating not doing anything. It took some time for all the leaders to manage and calm their fears and to begin to deal with the situation that caused the fear emotions.

In three out of four incidents, fear-related emotions had a major influence on the decision-making ability of the leader. The initial impression was a paralyzing or freezing effect. They were preoccupied with managing their fear-related emotions and resulting stressors.

All four leaders hid their fears from their followers and kept their emotions to themselves. They did not want to be seen or perceived as being weak. All four leaders used emotional labor in the form of surface acting or acting out a different emotion from what they were feeling inside and managed to hide their true emotional reactions. In essence, they put on a mask and pretended to be strong. One interviewee said, "People at work saw me as confident and yet at home I felt unsure."

Emotional labor or surface acting effects showed up for all of them at home and in the form of stress and health issues. They reported experiencing back pain, mental anguish, depression, mood swings, anxiety, tense muscles, excessive eating, becoming withdrawn from the outside world and at home to get quite time alone, and emotional breakdowns with crying at home, and being very cranky. They resorted to differing strategies in how they dealt with the stress. For example, some hired private coaches, some went to meditation classes, and some spent time at the gym exercising. All mentioned family support as one of the important factors in how they dealt with their fears and the resulting stress. There was often a lengthy recovery process and not a quick overnight healing.

All four interviewees reported that courage played some part in eventually adapting to the situation, but it took time and came in small, incremental steps. They had to regain their confidence, which was a process that took some time. Another interesting comment made by most of the interviewees was that they did not realize their courage at the time of the incident. It was only upon reflection that they saw the courageous steps they took over time.

As a result of conducting the pilot study, the following useful insights emerged: first was the need for me to generate a safe environment for the interviewees given the sensitive nature of the research topic. For example, stating in the introduction that I am the CEO of a mid-size corporation and have personally experienced fear-related emotions helped create safety for the research participants. Also, being empathetic to the interviewee's story by deeply listening and allowing them the space to share their story without interruption helped create safety and rapport. The second insight from the pilot study was to avoid leading questions, especially when I had a certain hypothesis or understanding in mind. Flanagan mentioned that interviewer remarks should be neutral and permissive. I stayed true to the inductive nature of the CIT. At the same time, I learned from the pilot study the value of probing for highly detailed responses by using follow-up questions such as "tell more about" or "can you explain what you specifically mean when you say…"

The pilot protocol was then modified to account for this feedback as well as feedback from the proposal hearing. The feedback from the proposal hearing resulted in modifying the protocol so it was less directed toward courage and to allow courage to emerge as result of the participants' response to how they dealt or managed their fear-related emotions. I only asked questions about courage as follow up. The actual interview protocol that was used in this study is attached as Appendix D.

The next step for this dissertation study was data analysis. For this step, I used emergent coding of the data or let themes emerge from the data themselves. While I had thought about some themes and hypotheses, I consciously suspended my assumptions and let themes emerge from the data. I used NVivo coding software to code and analyze the data.

The final step was interpreting and reporting. Before beginning this last step, as Flanagan (1954) suggested, I reviewed the prior four steps for any bias that may have been introduced and also disclosed any limitations. One of the important aspects of this final step was to conduct validity and trustworthiness checks of the data as suggested by Butterfield et al. (2005). I used the following checks for my study:

1. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. All transcripts were double-checked against the interview recording to ensure accuracy. The purpose of this check was to ensure that participant's narratives and stories were accurately captured and entered into the analysis software.

2. I asked another skilled interviewer to review and listen to random samples of a few recorded interviews so that the independent interviewer could check the transcripts of the selected recordings for fidelity.
3. I asked an independent researcher to place 25% of randomly selected incidents into categories that had been tentatively selected by me. With this check, I was looking for the level of agreement between the independent researcher and myself. There was a high level of agreement where over 90% the selected incidents were placed in the same categories.
4. I also established theoretical support and agreement by scrutinizing the support for the assumptions of my research using relevant scholarly literature, as well as comparing my established categories to scholarly literature to look for adequate support of these categories.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study was voluntary and participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time. As mentioned earlier, one of the potential participants did actually withdraw from the study during the consent form signing. Participants were given the opportunity to review and comment on the interview transcripts. Confidentiality was ensured and all interviews were treated with strict confidence, having all participants' information locked when not in use, and using pseudonyms for the CEOs when quoting from the text. Additionally, an application for ethics review was submitted to the PhD in Leadership and Change Programs' Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval prior to conducting any interviews. Informed consent was obtained from each participant.

Data and Findings

Introduction

This research explores leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. Fifteen leaders, mainly presidents and chief executive officers (CEOs), were interviewed. The CEOs shared their experiences with fear-related emotions and how these emotions affected key aspects of the leadership process. The purpose of the study was to better understand how these leaders experienced fear-related emotions through recollection of critical incidents where they felt danger, risk and/or threats. The interview questions were designed to explore the implications of these emotions to leaders' decision-making, relationships with followers, health and how they managed these emotions.

All interviews were transcribed and the transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 10 for common themes. The following summary of the research data presents the main emergent themes from the fifteen interviews. These themes are presented in alignment with the research questions along with sub themes as well as further illustrated by participants' stories from the interviews. Where appropriate the data are presented in tables and figures.

To help the reader place the critical incidents or stories within the participants' context, the next section will introduce the participants and their background.

The Participants

This section introduces the research participants by providing demographics of the 15 leaders followed by a brief description of the leaders' past experience in formal leadership roles along with key aspects of the leaders' personalities when shared by the participants.

Table 4.1 presents demographics describing the leaders and their organizations. The information provided includes leader's name, gender, age, highest educational degree, years as

CEO or president and the type of industry the leader's organization is in. To protect participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms were used in lieu of actual names. As can be seen from the table, there is a range of leadership experience (2–45 years) and a broad range of industry types. Three not-for-profit organizations were included, two in public education and one organization specializing in helping victims of domestic violence. The rest of the organizations were for-profit firms with a majority from the engineering/architecture industry. The one exception was a for-profit financial services firm. It is important to note that 12 of the 15 (80%) participants had five or more years of experience. As noted in the second chapter, experience is an important aspect of leader self-efficacy. Additionally five of the participants (33%) have retired from their CEO role. It was hoped that retired leaders might be more willing to talk about their experience with fear-related emotions because they would be less concerned about their leadership image. Table 4.1 is followed by a brief description of the background of each participant.

Table 4.1

Participant Demographics

Name (gender)	Age	Degree	CEO Yrs.	Active /retired	Industry
Merry (f)	65	M	15	R	Engineering and Technology
Don (m)	59	M	5	A	Engineering
Sam (m)	70	B	28	A	Architecture
Susan (f)	74	PhD	15	R	Education
Michael (m)	56	M	3	A	Engineering
John (m)	59	M	10	A	Engineering
Jeff (m)	50	M	1	A	Engineering
Cindy (f)	59	M	34	A	Non-profit
Ken (m)	75	PhD	45	R	Environmental Consulting
Doug (m)	77	M	37	A	Environmental Consulting
Ron (m)	64	M	15	R	Engineering
Chris (m)	58	M	37	A	Financial Services
Tim (m)	64	PhD	6	A	Education
Glenn (m)	60	M	11+	R	Engineering
Jay (m)	75	M	30+	A	Leadership Consulting

Merry has over fifteen years of experience as the CEO of two different organizations. She first became CEO of a major engineering consulting company in the U.S. and under her leadership the company grew to $1.6 billion in revenues. Later, she became the CEO of a startup and helped grow it and ultimately she sold the company for over $200 million. Today, she serves as a management consultant and serves on multiple councils and boards. Merry pointed out that she grew up in a military family. Merry was influenced by her dad's attitude toward life and its challenges. She mentioned that her dad often said, "Suck it up. Everything will be fine. You can do and be whatever you want to be. Do not sit around and, you know, feel sorry for yourself or think you cannot do something."

Don was appointed president and CEO of one of the leading geotechnical and environmental engineering consulting firms about five years ago. The company has about 600 employees in offices throughout the United States of America. Don describes himself as a very optimistic person, "I am normally a very upbeat, sort of bubbly person." This optimism greatly influences how Don deals with life's challenges. He said that he "grew up just believing that, when things are tough you just keep putting one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward." He also exhibited a strong belief or confidence in his ability to face leadership challenges. Don made it very clear that he seldom operates from a fear-related emotions perspective. In fact he mentioned "that's just not where I operate."

Sam has been the CEO of a West coast leading architecture for over 25 years. He recently relinquished the CEO role and retained the chairman of the board role wherein he is a full-time employee who focuses mostly on coaching and teaching other employees of the firm. The firm is over 100 years old and has staff of over 50 professionals. One of his unique characteristics is his focus on whole system thinking, awareness and being. For example, he mentioned that being part of a larger system helps us deal with fear-related emotions. Sam said that "if you think of the organization as being nested inside a bunch of other nested systems that have strong relationships built up over a hundred years, you—there's something—you can't quite reach out and touch it and add it up and weigh the pounds and all that kind of stuff, there is something very powerful there which you don't tend to believe has any validity when you're in your dark times and yet it does because at the end of the day that's probably what bails you out."

Susan held executive leadership roles within the educational field at the college, district and state levels. Recently she was the interim president of a community college in California and prior to that she served as president of two separate colleges. She also held a number of other educational leadership positions including division dean, assistant dean, interim chancellor and vice chancellor. The size of the colleges she served ranged from a few thousand to over thirty thousand students. Susan focuses on the positive aspects of situations rather than the negative and has a PhD degree with a focus on appreciative inquiry. In her words, “In all instances I’ve used the positive aspect of what’s going on. You know, instead of the glass is half empty it’s half full and it’s worked very effectively for me.” Susan also has a lot of confidence and takes pride in her ability to lead organizations through tough challenges they faced. “I’ve gone from one place to the other, um, they (people) know that I come in and fix things and clean it up or whatever. They know that I get it done and so that reputation kind of precedes me.”

Michael is the president and CEO of a 100-person regional consulting engineering firm in the Northwest. He started his executive leadership role as vice president of the company over ten years ago and has been the CEO for about three years now. Michael has a quiet sense of confidence about him. He said that “part of the reason that I have ended up in the position that I am in is that I tend to present things, my ideas, etc. with a high level of confidence and sort of believability.” When it comes to fear-related emotions, Michael thinks they can be very useful. He said, “It is actually a healthy thing because I think it makes me consider things more carefully.”

John is currently the president of a 30-person environmental science and engineering solutions company where he is providing overall leadership of the firm. Last year, he left his prior company where he was the president of a larger integrated engineering, science, and operations company for ten years. In this prior role, he was responsible for the strategic aspects of the firm including strategic planning and branding. John mentioned that he is a man of faith that has helped him deal with life’s challenges and uncertainties. He said, “I have a great deal of faith both in—both in a higher God and a faith in myself, too.” Relative to fear, John mentioned, “I’m not a man that—that fears. I have rarely—it’s not an emotion that has played a large role in my life in the past.”

About two years ago, Jeff became the president and CEO of a mid-sized consulting engineering company. Prior to becoming the CEO, Jeff was the president of this same company. Jeff describes himself as, “I’m an achiever and it’s all about the goals and you know, in my view, doing the right thing.” He also describes another side of his personality as “the next part of me that’s very strong is sort of the peacemaking type which generally doesn’t go and seek confrontation, probably would try and avoid it.”

Cindy has been the CEO and executive director of a small non-profit organization for 34 years. The national organization is built around a service-delivery model that responds to the needs of individuals who are at risk of or have been victimized by domestic violence. Cindy mentioned that one of the key elements of her role is to provide facilitative leadership and interact with different spheres that intersect with her organization such as community, law enforcement, and board of directors, donors, volunteers, consumers, and employees. Her view on emotions is summarized by her statement that “my job is not to pollute the system with my emotions. My job is to use emotions to inform me to do my work.”

Ken has over 45 years of experience building and leading environmental and waste management engineering and consulting firms. Over 40 years ago, he formed one of the United States’ first full service environmental groups when he morphed a world class geotechnical firm to include a full array of environmental engineers and scientists. This change was in response to an increasing public/regulatory focus on environmental and health impacts. Later on, he formed and was CEO of another company that grew to be a dominant firm for large superfund, mining and landfill sites in the Western U.S. His company was acquired by a larger one. He became the

CEO of the acquiring company until he retired. Ken is currently working as a strategic consultant for small-to medium-sized engineering and consulting companies. He describes himself as a very adaptive person who doesn't have fears. "I don't recall ever saying—'boy, I'm scared to death.' I mean, it is what it is. That's a characteristic I have." He went on to say, "I can't change the outside force, I can change myself to adapt to new things."

Doug began his executive leadership experience by holding the chief operating officer position of an environmental consulting firm for over seven years where he helped grow the business from 30 to 450 employees. Later, he left the COO position to start his own environmental consulting firm. As its chairman and CEO, he led the firm to be a profitable and successful company with revenues of about $350 million and 2,500 employees when he sold the firm. The international company had offices in 32 countries. Today, Doug is the CEO of a small environmental company that remains from the sale of the larger company he founded. He describes himself as someone who has a high risk tolerance and someone who is able to compartmentalize better than most people and not a great worrier. In his words, another aspect of Doug's personality is, "I am an eternal optimist, um, but I combine that with I'm—a planner. I try to see as far ahead as I can, and anticipate, and have plan A, B and C." He believes that this combination has allowed him to sleep at night even when things are not smooth.

Ron joined an engineering consulting company over thirty years ago and held ever-increasing management responsibilities—culminating with him becoming the CEO. During his time as CEO, the company grew from $60 million to $1.2 billion in revenues. Both company revenues and profits increased, making the company one of the most profitable and fastest growing firms in the engineering consulting industry. Today, Ron serves on several boards including being the chairman of a few companies. He also teaches leadership and management at the university level. Ron described himself as a risk-adverse person who avoided risking the business on any one decision. He said, “It is important not to make a quick decision.” When it comes to emotions, Ron mentioned that “my character: it is a lot more colorful and a lot more expressive.” He is seen as having a more emotionally expressive personality.

Chris is the owner, president and CEO of a small regional financial services company with twelve employees. The company manages investments and insurance services for individuals and organizations. He has been in the CEO role for over 30 years. Chris also serves on several community and organizational boards including being the chairman of several boards for organizations with a few million dollars annual budgets. He describes himself as objective, empathetic and a good listener. As he mentioned, he is also a leader with belief in himself, his team, and the plan they have to deal with challenges. He mentioned, “You have to have belief in yourself and in your team and in your plan to a certain extent while at the same time being open to change.”

For the past few years, Tim has been the president of a large university in the Northwest. The university has over 30,000 students and 6,000 employees. He describes his position as “one of the characteristics of this CEO Job is that there are a lot of constituencies.” Prior to this role, he was provost and senior vice president of academic affairs at another major university, where he led efforts to broaden the university’s role in the city’s revitalization. Tim also served as the dean of two other colleges at two separate universities. He has published several books and a number of journal articles. Tim describes himself as a very rational person and yet his wife sees another side to his personality: “I always thought of myself as a very rational person and my wife tells me that I am also extremely passionate and emotional.” He also describes himself as a moderate risk taker who takes reasonable but not crazy risks and “confident enough.”

Glenn was the chairman and CEO of a $300 million professional engineering and sciences service company. During his more than 11 years as the CEO, the company grew from a relatively small regional focus to a nationally diversified firm through both organic and acquisitive growth. The total revenue of the firm grew nearly five times during this period. Glenn retired from this company few years ago and has since been the CEO of his own management consulting firm helping other firms with strategic planning, leadership development and operational management. He also serves on several company boards. Glenn describes himself as, "I'm big on projecting a vision and then working towards that vision and setting some goals." When it comes to experiencing emotions, he mentioned that "I was always pretty good about not letting my emotions show on my sleeve."

Jay is the CEO of a small leadership development firm specializing in leadership development, consulting, and coaching to professional services companies throughout North America. Jay is an accomplished business leader who has served as the chief operating officer and CEO of several mid-sized architecture/engineering companies prior to starting his own firm. Jay had extensive training in group and individual processes wherein he learned a lot about himself, including his fears. He is a teacher for groups about emotional intelligence and personal mastery. One aspect of Jay's personality that is important for him is to be seen in a positive light in as many situations as possible. He said, "I am more out-driven and outside of myself."

In the next section, the incidents are classified by the type or source of stimuli of fear-related emotions. This is done to better understand the typical sources and types of stimuli which leaders are exposed to in the context of their roles and the leadership process.

Stimuli of Fear-related Emotions—Incidents of Threat, Risk, and Danger

Using the interview transcripts, I isolated 76 unique incidents that were characterized by the research participants as being risky, threatening or dangerous. Duncan (1972) used characteristics of the internal and external organizational environments as a source of perceived uncertainty. Consistent with Duncan (1972) and as mentioned in the second chapter, I will use (a) the external environment and (b) the internal environment with a focus on the organization, its employees and leaders as the basis for classifying the sources of stimuli of fear-related emotions. Some of these threats are in the external or internal environment, while others are psychological or perceived threats within the leader based on how they appraise the situation. Table 4.2 shows the type of incidents shared by the CEOs as classified along these two dimensions as well as the type and subtype of incidents that comprised the two dimensions.

Table 4.2

Incident Classification by Source of Stimuli

Sources and Types of Fear-related Emotional Stimuli	Number of Incidents
External Environment	**22**
Economy or Market	14
Loss of major project or program	3
Economic downturn	2
Economic recession	2
Funding risk or uncertainty	1
Economic uncertainty	1
Sudden change in the market	1
Loss of business or organization	1
Loss of key client(s)	1
Drop in stock market	1
Increased market competition	1
Regulatory or Legal	4
Legal risk or threat	2
Changes in regulations	1
Legal fight (being sued)	1
Political	4
Leader's life physically threatened	3
Union contract negotiations	1
Internal Environment	**54**
Organization	25
Potential loss of organization	6
Threats to brand or reputation	4
Mergers and acquisitions	4
Risks of starting a new service/venture	3
Ownership and/or leadership succession or transition	3
Unsatisfactory financial performance	3
Organizational change	2
Employee Threats	11
Involuntary turnover (layoffs due to lack of business)	6
Voluntary turnover (loss of key employees)	5
Leader-Related	18
Role change or loss	7
Difficult conversations	5
Public speaking	2
Personal loss or the threat of loss (i.e. family member)	2
Betraying loyalties	2

In the next two sections, examples of actual incidents using the above classifications and participants' own stories are shared to illustrate the basis of classification.

Stimuli From the External Environment

The stimuli from the external environment are often related to uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity inherent in today's organizational context. Twenty-nine percent (22 of the 76 total) of all incidents reported were related to the external environment.

Economy or market-related events. Of these stimuli, economic and/or market-related stimuli were mentioned 63% of the time (14 of the 22 total). A specific source of threats, risk and danger mentioned by participants was a recession or downturn in the economy. For example, Jay shared "I think the time I was most frightened was in 1990. In 1989 there was a recession and we had to go through a downsizing of the firm." For Jay, both the recession and its impact of staff downsizing were stimuli of fear-related emotions. Ken mentioned that "up until that time (firm's name) had never had a downturn in (its) history from when it started. We were always growing, growing, growing. When interest rates went up like that, our clients suddenly said—hey, I can't do anything, I can't build anything, and I can't afford to get the money. We had bank financing and our cost of banking was going up. So that could have been a time when one would have fear, yes." Don perhaps said it most eloquently when he shared:

> I think probably the thing that I would point to the most would have been the 2007/2008 recession, where I observed the bottom falling out of our industry and unlike I'd seen before. You know, I started my professional practice in 1977, and been through recessions in the past. Even before I went to college I was working in a factory and been laid off in a recession. But what we saw in 2007 was really different than I'd seen before, and I had a really strong sense of uncertainty about what the future was going to hold. Would we survive this? Would we come out the other end?

Despite the fact that most of these incidents happened a few years ago, for some of the participants the memories of these incidents stirred up deep emotional reactions which can be heard in their voices as they recall what happened. The written transcripts do not adequately convey these emotions.

Regulatory or legal events. Another common theme within the external environment stimuli is regulatory or legal threats, risks, and/or dangers. One of the participants mentioned that a change in environmental regulations almost wiped out demand for one of his firm's environmental services. Ken mentioned a potential change at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a source of risk to his business:

> When Newt Gingrich became speaker of the house and the Republicans took over the house in 1994, you probably recall he had a hundred things he was going to change. He was going to eliminate the EPA. So I suddenly, as I was going to meetings, found that clients were saying—we're going to delay things for a year. The EPA is getting beat up—if the EPA goes away, we may not have to do this stuff. So suddenly I said—wow, the existing projects are ongoing but if this is the way industry is going to be, we may not get the same number of projects.

Legal threats can also be a source of fear-related emotions. For example, one firm was sued by a sub-consultant and nearly went out of business. Sam, the firm's CEO described the incident as follows:

> Another very tense time wasn't so long ago where we were sued by a mechanical engineer. He didn't think he got paid correctly and he did a lot of extra work. We went to the client for extra services but we were not successful. So the [mechanical engineer] sued us for the money, even though we weren't paid by the client. They ultimately prevailed in court and it took about $3.3 million out of the company. So you know, and it was a very aggressive attorney, it wasn't like let's be nice. It was sort of like—we'll shut you down any way we can. That was the feeling you got.

Political incidents. Political threats were also another significant source of external environment stimuli. The life of one CEO was physically threatened. Merry shared the following incident:

> Dangers—well, let's talk about dangers for a minute, okay? I guess probably I would describe this danger as—you know, I had a situation in (a foreign country) where I was—my life was threatened, so when I would go to (foreign country), I'd have to go with body guards and change hotels at the last minute and things like that. So I mean I feel that's probably the most dangerous situation that I've ever been in as a CEO of an engineering firm. You know, it's not too much fun to have your life threatened.

Tim, a college president, was negotiating with the faculty union for a new contract, but the negotiations turned personal and dangerous. Differences in views on issues can turn into perceived physical risk for the leader. While in reality the risk might be small, nevertheless fear-related emotions can be experienced. Here is one example from Tim:

> You know I have an assigned parking space in the garage down here. There was a sign there that said reserved for the president all days all hours and sometime in January I told our physical plant people to take that off. Just say reserved all days all hours. Don't say reserved for president, because I was worried that someday somebody might decide to slash my tires or break my windows or whatever. Now it wasn't that I thought that would really happen but I thought it was a . . . one to five, ten percent chance that somebody would. So now that is physical fear. That is fear . . . not that I thought somebody would shoot me, but you know that becomes very close to think that people would actually come in and occupy your office, destroy your car, come to your house.

The external environment is one of the major sources of leaders' stimuli of fear-related emotions. The research participants shared 22 total incidents classified as stimuli from the external environment. Sixty-three percent (14 of the 22 incidents) were related to economic or market stimuli, 18% (4 of the 22 incidents) were related to regulatory or legal stimuli, and 18% (4 of the 22 incidents) were related to political stimuli.

Stimuli From the Internal Environment

A total of 54 incidents were coded to the internal environment stimuli. This represents 71% of the total incidents reported by the participants. Further classification of these incidents showed over 46% (25 of the 54 incidents) were at the overall organizational level, 20% (11 of the 54 incidents) were related primarily to the employees of the organization, and 33% (18 of the 54 incidents) were related specifically to the leaders themselves.

Organization-wide events. Organization-wide incidents included the potential loss of the organization due to several factors. Sam referred to not having capital and fearing the loss of the organization because of that:

> I think I guess the fear is really grinding down where you run out of money and the jig is up, you know. You just don't want to get shoved against the wall to where that's the only option left is that you have to close down or something like that.

Glenn referred to the threat and fear of losing the company as one of the three biggest fears or threats for him: "One that's more notable than others is when you think a decision you've made might be putting the organization at risk." In this case, this leader said, "I was fearful that, jeez, man, we'd lose the company under my watch." Leaders saw losing the company or the organization as one of the biggest potential failures they did not want to be associated with.

Another overall organizational stimulus was the threat to the organization's brand or reputation. For most organizations, their image, brand, or reputation is an important strategic advantage. Ron articulated this point when he mentioned:

> Sometimes you foul up on a project, you have very difficult situations to remedy, and to make good, and the most important thing we have as consulting engineers is our reputation. And bad news travels very quickly in this industry.

Mergers and acquisitions also represented another source of organization-wide stimuli. Leaders referred to merger and acquisition decisions as being very risky. For example, Glenn mentioned that he had this bad dream about one of the acquisitions:

> We had an acquisition and I think it was pretty risky as it was structured. And (the firm founder) used to say, don't do anything that kills the goose that lays the golden egg. And I woke up in the middle of the night with (the founder) and a goose in his hand, and I'm going, oh, my gosh. And we killed the deal actually. We killed the deal. And it was a great decision.

Merry also thought that merger and acquisition decisions were one of the riskiest decisions for a leader to make:

> Every time we would do an acquisition, you'd feel the risk. You know, you'd think, Oh my God, I hope this is the right decision. I hope that it ends up being successful and I hope that I don't wake up tomorrow morning and all I have is a bad lease and no people in the building, you know. I think I did 28 or 29 acquisitions in my life at (name of

> company) and I think if I had to say what I felt were the riskiest decisions that I made, it would be those.

While experimentation was a common part of leadership, leaders feared failure as they took on new services or ventures. For example, Ken discussed his apprehension about starting a new business by saying, “I was doing something brand new and didn’t know where it was going.” Jeff discussed how he worried about the risk of new services:

> Obviously, do I worry about things? Yeah, every time somebody came to me with a crazy new type of service they wanted to sell that I didn’t know if our liability insurance covered us for. I got to worry about, well how could this really go bad, right? And what do I need to do to try and protect us from those things?

Leadership and ownership succession is also another overall organizational stimulus that spurns fear-related emotions. All organizations that survive long enough have to deal with leadership and ownership succession. For example, Doug shared a story about the difficulties he had with ownership transition:

> This particular instance was related to my exit from the company. I started the firm when I was 40-years-old. I still owned about 27% of the company when we finally cashed out. I had 150—approximately—partners worldwide. I was by far the largest single shareholder, and had continued to serve as the group CEO, and chairman. But as the years went by, you know, I was concentrating on building the company, and not operating individual businesses. We had this unusual structure which had lots of advantages in building the business, but it had a significant disadvantage when trying to disengage and I had decided I wanted to move on to other things when I turned 60. I don’t know why; it was just a 20-year run. It had been a great 20 years and I was enjoying doing what I was doing—enjoying the people, but I also wanted to quit while I was ahead, and have the stamina, and intellectual capacity to do it right. As right as I could do it, anyway. I wanted to do something else with my remaining years. So I started the process of trying to figure out a way to monetize the business in a way that was good for my partners, and good for the business that would leave it where it could continue to grow, and thrive, and by the way, (firm name) is now, I’m told, the largest environment consultancy in the world. I hear they topped the $1 billion mark in revenue. Anyway, obviously I had to look out for my own interests too and I had enough business experience, and had talked to a lot of other folks who had, and I tried to maneuver through some of these same issues, and realized that it was not going to be easy to find a route that would work for everybody, and get everybody on board, and replace yours truly so that the company could continue to move ahead.

Doug and his company ultimately decided to go public wherein he was able to transition out of the firm both in terms of ownership and leadership. However, to this day, he still owns a small firm that was part of the larger firm he founded and sold except for this small company that he was not able to sell due to liability issues.

Leaders also shared that unsatisfactory financial performance was another stimulus for fear-related emotions, primarily because it signals a potential failure and is ultimately a threat to survival for both the leader and the organization. As an example, Glenn shared how he acted on the fear of his company not making its numbers:

> And so those kinds of examples, you know, fears of the company not making its mark because I was the CEO and really behind the budget and need to make changes. I followed that through to the end as the CEO.

Employee-related incidents. The second category of internal environment stimuli was related to employees' threats. Voluntary and involuntary employee turnover was one of the stimuli commonly mentioned by leaders when asked to share an incident or situation that felt threatening, risky or dangerous. This is especially critical for professional services firms that rely on their employees rather than their products for a competitive advantage. When Chris was asked about incidents that felt threatening, risky or dangerous he discussed how his close-knit organization recently hired someone new to work at his firm. This individual recently accepted a job with another firm that offered double her current salary. Chris was concerned about the impact this might have on his other employees:

> The impact of that was that other staff members in the company right away said, "Well, if she can get twice as much money as she's making, how much more money could I make somewhere else? I mean, I really, really like where I am, but I never imagined that maybe somewhere else out there, someone would pay me twice as much money." So as I began to see the ripple effects of this, in a small company such as mine, if I were to have three people leave at one time, the effect could be catastrophic and I've always prided myself on being out front in terms of the compensation I paid people. I always paid them what I

> think is in the 90% percentile of what's out there, but this was kind of shocking. We've grown rather aggressively over the last three years, so one of the ways I tried to deal with that is with one of our key people. I put in a phantom stock option planned for them, where they don't have to put any money up, but as the company grows in value, they have an account out there that gives them a percentage of that growth that's payable to them at retirement. Well, it became clear that the individual involved said, "Well, I don't know if I feel very secure with that program. I might rather have cash on hand today." And we talked to another person in the company and I could tell that this one person leaving was causing all sorts of anxiety about compensation and I felt very personally at risk that a good portion of the team that I'd created could walk out the door, either to another competitor or maybe try to say, "Well, you know what? Maybe we could take these 25 accounts from your firm and maybe we'll go open up our own and maybe we could be ahead." Now there's no way I could see them being ahead, but they may go through that. So for a period of time, I really had to think "Well, what is my response going to be?" So for a period of weeks, I was very, very concerned about what I might do if I lost that entire part of this small business. So at any rate, we had to deal with that imbalance and we seem to be in a much better spot today than we were then, but there was a period of time where that was very fearful.

What follows is an example of the threat of involuntary staff turnover due to lack of work. Here is Sam's reaction when his firm's workload was low:

> When we start running low on work and we start laying off more and more people and we're not getting anything and we start to really close down around our core services and society is not active and so we can't seem to get things—now that's a pretty fearful moment.

Leader-related incidents. The next group of incidents was classified as leader-related internal environmental stimuli. Within this group of incidents, one of the biggest stimuli of fear-related emotions was the change to or loss of formal leadership role. This signifies the importance of power and authority to some of the leaders. For example, Guy experienced the loss of his wife due to a long battle with cancer and had to take time off work to help his wife with her illness:

> The first one occurred while (another leader—the CEO) and I shared the leadership of the firm. The communication between the two of us was very poor. And it wasn't always a safe environment. And I didn't worry about my job, but people looked at me in the firm sort of as the leader, and that always bothered (the CEO) because of my personality and my extroversion and my outgoing nature. People would sort of—the staff would sort of look at me as the leader. And (the CEO), because I had been in the president role, staff didn't really understand the difference between the president and CEO as the two of us

> were there, and that was good. So, like, Mommy and Daddy are fine, looks like we're in good shape.
>
> (The CEO) was uncomfortable with that, and he clearly wanted to exert himself and to be the CEO and to let everybody know that he was the leader. So we would have these uncomfortable moments where people would turn to me, I would have to turn to (the CEO), and then (the CEO) would jump in.
>
> And what happened when (wife name) was dying, I had to step out of—I didn't totally step out, but as the cancer got worse and worse, I would have to be taking her to different doctors and traveling more and being out of the office more. And I could see (it was almost a gift for him because it enabled him to basically assert himself and assert himself more. And then as she got sicker and sicker and eventually died, I just dialed back more and more and more.
>
> So when I came back, after a short period of time grieving, I realized that all of the major positions I had in the firm were taken, some by friends of mine that had stepped in and sort of usurped the position, because the firm needed somebody to do that, and I was happy that they did it. And then others were more emotional where (the CEO) was basically able—without me around—able to assert himself as sort of the leader and in many ways very magnanimous to me by letting everybody know how he helped me through this.
>
> So when I came back, I basically had to reassert myself. I had to decide what to do, but basically all my work was gone. All the roles I had, the technical roles, were taken over by others. The management roles were taken over by others, and as significantly the emotional leader role was taken over by others.
>
> And so I basically went through the loss of my wife, and then I went through basically the loss of my, for lack of a better word, ego or position. And I did have some moments of panic and some moments of real—I won't say terror because that would be a little too much, but real anxiety like, am I needed here? Am I wanted here? If it's this easy to replace me, what should I do?

Another leader-related stimulus is difficult conversations. These are conversations that leaders need to have with others within or outside of the organization about difficult or uncomfortable issues. Chris shared his fear of having difficult conversations:

> I think increasingly the fear sometimes is—I don't want to have a difficult conversation where I may have to confront somebody with something. I may have to have bad news and discuss a bad situation with somebody in order to get us to a better outcome and I think the older I become, the more comfortable I am in having the difficult conversations. It's never easy, but I've come to understand that it's really part of the job and so I think that's a part of it.

A very common stimulus of fear-related emotions for most people is public speaking. Public speaking emerged as one of the leader-related stimuli within organizations. The first example was shared by Jay who mentioned his anxiety when he had to facilitate training sessions for groups of people:

> Well, it used to be that before I would do a session as a consultant, as a facilitator, I would be anxious and I would study extensively before the session out of sort of fear that I wouldn't know enough, and I would call that sort of self-doubt, and it's a specific fear of not being good enough, not knowing enough, and so I would cram, and read, and feel anxious, and not sleep well the night before.

The second example was shared by Ken when he was the CEO of a publically traded company and had to make presentations to Wall Street. It's important to note that Ken was not comfortable admitting that he ever experienced fear-related emotions. In this example, he came the closest to doing so:

> And yet when I'd go to Wall Street, I was sort of a shy guy. So did it take courage for me to go? Yeah. Was there fear? That's interesting. Was there fear the first time I had to go meet some investors? All these Harvard graduate guys, I don't know very much about the stock market and I'm going to go talk about a public company. Maybe there was fear there. That's an interesting point. I definitely was uncomfortable.

Experiencing personal loss such as the loss or threat of the loss of a family member was also another fearful aspect of leader-related stimuli. Don shared this incident:

> In April 2009 our Board of Directors, you know, basically told me that they'd gone through a review process and they wanted me to be the next CEO and I was supposed to take over as CEO in June. In early May my wife was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia—she was given a less than a ten percent chance of survival. I remember getting back from the hospital where she was first diagnosed and calling (name omitted) who was the CEO at the time and saying, this is what I learned and to be perfectly honest being CEO is not the most important thing in my life so I don't know where this is going to head but, you know, in terms of the company I would suggest that the board may want to look at some alternatives. You know, we've been told that this was the treatment plan and you know, six months from now she'll either be on the road to recovery or she'll be dead. I don't mean to be flippant about it but that really was the truth at the time and I said, if the board wants to go ahead, then they should find somebody else, and if—and (the current CEO) said well, he was willing to wait. So he waited and I became CEO in February of the following year because by December of that year she had stabilized and was really in remission and her outlook was much, much better. So she and I together made the decision that it would make sense for me to take on this role the following year—so I did. But it was being willing to completely walk away from it. You know, realizing what was important and what wasn't important was really helpful. I don't think I've really felt a connection to things or stuff but I will tell you that when she was in the

> hospital I remember coming home the first time. She was in full time for ninety days and then outpatient for two hundred and twenty days. And I remember coming home to the house at night thinking, none of this is important. You know, none of my physical possessions are important. All I really cared about was my wife and my kids. And nothing else mattered and I actually didn't think about work for probably four weeks—the first four weeks when she was in because it wasn't until the end of that four week period where she actually started to recover. She started to come back a bit. Every day for the first four weeks she was worse than she was the day before.

When Don was asked about how he felt, he responded:

> I was scared. Yeah, I was. I was scared for her. I was—you know, I remember coming home and feeling like okay, so if she dies, your life's going to be really different. You know and that you're going to be alone. You know, we've been married for over thirty years. Things are going to really be different. But I didn't really didn't dwell on that.

The betrayal of loyalties is another leader-related stimuli shared by the research participants. While loyalties to others may represent loving attachments, they also represent limitations at times. To overcome these limitations is to take risk. Jeff found himself in this dilemma of doing what is right for the organization versus loyalty to his mentor when he had to confront the former CEO of his organization. Jeff was answering the researcher's question about sharing an incident in which he felt the situation as threatening, dangerous or risky:

> The biggest one I'll point to though is related to how I came to be combining these two roles (the president and CEO). In January 2013, it had been announced and it was pretty well known internally that I was the successor to our president who had announced his retirement. But there had been a fair amount of dysfunction between the president and the CEO at the time, and now the president was going to retire and then it was sort of intended that I continue to work alongside the CEO, who I think probably in his plans was going to work about another four more years in his current capacity. Ultimately it was through attending the [ACEC] SEI training and doing that intense personal mastery work that I learned a few things about myself and was able to honestly come to the conclusion that our company was in trouble if we were going to continue with our current CEO and that I was the person that needed to combine those two roles into one. When that epiphany hit me it was the most devastating, emotional realization that I'd ever had that I can think of. Because I was not a power-oriented person and the person to whom I felt needed to be displaced was in fact, you know, one of my mentors for the past twenty years. But I had come to really understand the failings in our leadership in our firm and it hit me as clear as anything has ever had—that despite my personal wish to not have to do some pretty unpleasant things, that the company needed me to do that and I was the only person who could do that. And this was after a conversation with—with (a personal

> coach). I went back to my hotel room and I called my wife and, you know, I was on the verge of tears with what I felt was a very terrible realization and it scared the hell out of me. An interesting thing in your research on the emotional response, this happened a year and a half ago and to this day I can't tell that story without feeling a really strong kind of sad emotion in me. Yet because I knew it was what was needed to do that was what allowed me to have the strength to put aside my personal fears and preferences to not have to go through this and take this on. And, you know, the way it fell out is I came back and I—again all I can tell you is that the single-minded focus on what was the right thing to do—I was able to overcome any of my internal fears.

In summary, the research participants shared the following types of stimuli that they characterized as threatening, risky and/or dangerous:

A. External Environment Stimuli (represented 29% of incidents)

   1. Economy or market-related events

   2. Regulatory or legal events

   3. Political incidents

B. Internal Environment Stimuli (represented 71% of incidents)

   1. Organization-wide events

   2. Employee-related incidents

   3. Leader-related incidents

These stimuli are in many ways interdependent and there is an important interplay between them. For example, an external stimulus such as a recession can cause an internal stimulus of staff layouts that can lead to the stimulus of difficult conversations. Fear-related emotions are often an emotional reaction that results from the interplay between issues in the environment, both external and/or internal, and those within the leader (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. Stimuli of fear-related emotions.

One of the key research questions is how leaders' experience fear-related emotions. To better understand the emotional experience, the next three sections describe the participants' emotional experience and highlight the types of fear-related emotions and other emotions which were experienced, the intensity of the emotional experience as well as the types of fears experienced as expressed by the participants.

The Emotional Experience

Types of emotions experienced. The research participants experienced a variety of fear-related emotions as well as other emotions. Leaders used the following words to describe their fear-related emotions: fear, fright, scared, panic, terror, quivering, dread, hesitation, trepidation, self-doubt, anxiety, concern, nervousness, and worry.

For example, several participants experienced fear when describing their emotional reaction to the threatening, risky or dangerous stimuli. Here Jay describes his emotional experience to an economic recession and his fear of his organization dying or failing as a result:

> It (the organization) didn't go down, and we successfully merged. I stepped out of it at that time, but it was close to being a dread, a dread almost a death of my life's work to that point, and it was sort of spiraling into sort of—well, a deep dread, a fear that was almost immobilizing.

Merry described her emotional experience as being scared when her life was physically threatened in a foreign country:

> Well, scared. [Laughter] You know, it's kind of strange having a guy stand outside your door and one by the elevator all night and having to sweep your room before you go in and those kinds of things. You know, you never think as a CEO of an engineering firm that your life's going to be in danger really. You think, you know—you get fear from other ways other than having your life threatened, but—so I say that was probably the most frightened I was in all my years as CEO.

Some of the participants talked about experiencing fear and anxiety as well as other emotions such as betrayal and anger. Cindy described her emotional reaction when she heard that one of her staff had an inappropriate sexual relationship with a high school student:

> So this individual who was representing us, we had a long history of working with was out in the field working on a campaign in one of the high schools. And what happened is he developed an inappropriate relationship with one of the youths that resulted in a sexual encounter, several sexual encounters.
>
> And so the threat situation is one day I received a heads-up phone call from the communications specialist at the local police department telling me that an employee of the organization had just been arrested, which I found very shocking. But I assumed it was something benign like shoplifting or something. And then she went on to tell me the circumstances that they had actually—this young girl had her wired and recorded several communications with (staff member) that absolutely without a doubt verified that, in fact, an inappropriate relationship had occurred. And she called to give me a heads-up.
>
> And so I hung up the phone, and I could just feel the fear anxiety level come up big time in terms of what this was going to lead to as far as public exposure, feeling absolutely betrayed and angry with this staff member that he would do something as ridiculous as what he did. So there's a whole stirring of emotional experience around that particular real threat situation.

This threat and resulting emotions are especially relevant to Cindy whose non-profit organization is in the business of responding to the needs of individuals who are at risk of domestic violence or have been victimized by it.

John discussed how having employees in his firm who count on him to bring in work and to keep them busy and employed is a constant worry:

> So then I worry, well, what if I can't bring in the money that I'm supposed to bring in? What if I can't help these people? What if I can't do that? And the anxiety just—well, it's not anxiety, but the constant worry just rolls around my mind all the time.

For Jay, his emotional experience lasted for some time "I remember those weeks, and a few months where the dread had taken over." For others, the emotional experience of fear is shorter. Sam described his experience with fear-related emotions when his firm was running low on workload for his staff:

> I would have to say also that there of course were the times when it would be months when we're down (on workload) but the times I was really fearful would be usually less than a week that I'd be really in the grip, really gripped by the thing. But nonetheless, that doesn't mean that the rest of those months you're sort of under stress, but didn't quite have the same level of fear.

They also felt other related emotions and physical states. Some of these emotions and/or states signaled aggressive tendencies such as anger, upset, mad while others signaled passive tendencies such as depression, funk, disappointment, post-traumatic stress disorder, helplessness and exhaustion. Some of the participants also experienced betrayal, guilt, and/or insult.

As an example of these other emotions, Tim discussed what he termed as post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of negotiating a new faculty union contract:

> The biggest one where I became most conscious of this notion of fear or what I described to you I think as post-traumatic stress disorder—was our bargaining with our faculty union. You know we do that every two years because it is a two-year contract. So this is really my third or fourth time. The previous times though were not a big deal. You know there is some stress, some tension, but as soon as it's done it's done. It all goes away. This time there was a lot of acrimony on campus—posters appeared on campus like with

> my picture and the picture of an African American woman who supposedly is a janitor here, but if she is I have never seen the woman saying, "Why should this man earn this much and this woman earn only this much?" Posters where it has two arrows and it says, "Faculty and students are going this way. The administration is taking PSU in the wrong direction." You know other quite aggressive kinds of articles in the student newspaper. And then of course the vote by the faculty union to…first to authorize a strike where all the members get to vote and then their announcement that in ten days they are going to go on strike.

Not all participants acknowledged their experience with fear emotions. For example, Ken shared that he asked the people who worked for or with him if he ever experienced fear:

> After I found out I was going to talk to you (the researcher), I did talk to some of the people I worked with at (company name) and some of the people I worked with at (company name) and (company name). I asked them, do you think—did you ever see me acting fearful, scared? And they all said—no, I don't recall you ever being scared.

John also mentioned that he does not know or experience fear:

> Well, when you talk about fear, I'm not a man that fears. It's not an emotion that has played a large role in my life in the past. And it surely plays a very small role in my life now. And I don't know why that is. I just don't really fear. If I said I don't fear anything, then that would be arrogant. But I wasn't brought up that I should fear God, and fear is not a motivator to me.

Intensity of emotional experience. Most of the incidents that were shared were not recent and happened a few years ago. Given the temporal nature of emotions, one could assume that intensity of the emotional experience will be low. To the contrary, the intensity of the emotional experience varied where some of the participants shared very intense emotional reactions to the incidents and others shared less intense emotional reactions. The intensity of the emotional reactions is most evident in the voices of participants rather than in their words. However, one can still sense the intensity of the motions from some of their words. For example, when Jay mentioned his emotional experience to an economic recession which happened in the 1990s, he used words such as "gripped with fear," "deep dread," and "fear that was immobilizing" to describe the intensity of his emotional experience. One can also sense the intensity in Jeff's words when he shared his reaction to a difficult decision and action that he realized he needed to take:

> I went back to my hotel room and I called my wife and you know, I was on the verge of tears with what I felt was a very terrible realization and it scared the hell out of me.

Types of Fears Experienced and Relationship to Fundamental Fears

The participants were often aware of what type of fear was driving their emotional experience. I will use their own words, when available, to summarize the types of fears shared in response to the different incidents. Table 4.3 summarizes the type of fears mentioned and the frequency they were mentioned by the participants.

Table 4.3

Fear Types

Type of Fear	Number of Times Mentioned by Participants
Fear of not being good enough or not knowing enough (self-doubt)	9
Fear of loss (material, ego, staff, company, power, control)	8
Fear of death (existential fear)	6
Fear of the unknown (uncertainty)	4
Fear of making tough or wrong decision	4
Fear of not mattering or not being important	3
Fear of public speaking	2
Fear of letting others down	2
Fear of not being liked	2
Fear of doing harm to people	1
Fear of embarrassment	1
Fear of abandonment	1
Fear of physical harm	1
Fear of change	1
Fear of confrontation	1
Fear of risk	1
Fear of being vulnerable	1

The most common fear the participants experienced in response to the incidents was the fear of not being good enough or not knowing enough. This fear indicated that the participants were experiencing or feeling some self-doubt or lack of confidence. This may indicate low self-efficacy. For example, Jay used to experience this fear when he facilitated leadership training sessions:

> Well, it used to be that before I would do a session as a consultant, as a facilitator, I would be anxious that I would study extensively before the session for—out of sort of fear that I wouldn't know enough, and I would call that sort of self-doubt, and it's a specific fear of not being good enough, not knowing enough.

Michael expressed this same type of fear-related emotions in terms of self-doubt when he was leading a major organizational change in his firm:

> I mean I was confident that it was a very positive organizational change to be making, but it was a pretty large shift from what the status quo had been. And I think you know there is always a certain amount of self-doubt.

Another fear that was common among the participants was the fear of loss. Common losses mentioned included the loss of position or role, loss of identity, loss of key staff or employees, and the loss of the company or organization. John mentioned a number of losses and his anxiety over them:

> So I basically went through the loss of my wife, and then I went through basically the loss of my, for lack of a better word, ego or position. And I did have some moments of panic and some moments of real, I won't say terror because that would be a little too much, but real anxiety like.

The fear of death or existential fear was mentioned by a number of participants. This is one of the fundamental fears of human beings so it's not surprising to hear it mentioned by some of the leaders. For the participants in this research, the fear of death was not limited to a person. It included the death of organizations as well. Here Chris discussed his fear for the survival of an organization where he was the chairman of the board. His fear motivated him as the chairman to make leadership changes to ensure the survival of the organization:

> I determined based on what I was seeing in some employee surveys, along with the financial results, that there needed to be a change in the presidency and that the organization needed some radical adjustments. And in that case, the fear was if this organization doesn't make changes, it will die.

One of the critical roles of leaders is to make decisions, often times difficult or tough ones. As Tim reflected on the recent negotiations the university had with its faculty union, he pondered whether the fear of making a tough decision played a key role in the negotiation:

> I worry about us bending over too far; you know do we worry too much about getting involvement from everybody? Are we spending too much time being nice? Are we too afraid of making tough decisions?

Glenn also brought up the fear of making the wrong decision based on consequences when he discussed the gap between knowing that an issue needed to be addressed and taking real actions to address it. This is commonly known as the knowing-doing gap:

> The fear of consequences if it weren't the right decision. What are the consequences and are the risks greater by making the decision or not making the decision? And some people, I think, reconcile that. You know this faith that is to not make dramatic moves or to not make a certain decision.

Another fear that was shared by the participants is the fear of not mattering or the fear of not being important. Jay was transitioning the leadership of the firm he founded to his younger partner as he is getting closer to retirement. This type of transition is often fraught with a number of fears as Jay shared:

> I believe it is fear, so I was just foraging around, and looked at the fear, and it would be fear of either abandonment, or fear of not mattering anymore. I think that gets down to an almost existential idea.

Glenn summarized three of his worries or fears (fear of doing harm to people, fear of embarrassment and fear of risk) by saying:

> There are two or three triggers for me that get me worried---putting the company at risk, anything impacting people, and not meeting expectations to deliver something are the three things that have always gotten to me even to this day.

When Tim was having conflict with the faculty union and he was concerned that someone might harm his car because his parking space was marked, he experienced what he called "So now that is physical fear." Sam mentioned how he wanted people in his firm to be more open and not to have the fear of vulnerability: "when I see people not being vulnerable is to help them see the strength of it and how it's okay to be—you can be safe that way." Jeff also mentioned how his personality type avoids confrontation: "the next part of me that's very strong is sort of the peacemaking type which generally doesn't go and seek confrontation, probably would try and avoid it."

Given the understanding of leaders' experience with fear-related emotions, the next section presents data on how these emotions influence leader decisions in a very broad sense.

Influence of Fear-Related Emotions on Leader Decisions

In this section, I will examine the data regarding how fear-related emotions influenced leaders' decisions. Specifically, when exposed to threatening, risky or dangerous stimuli, do leaders decide to focus on reducing the level or avoiding their fear-related emotions (ignore or leave the situation or incident) or do leaders decide to deal with the situation itself even if they experience fear-related emotions. The first option is focused on addressing the fear-related emotions and the second option is more adaptive in the face of threats, risks or danger. One outcome would be emotions-focused and the other would be situation or incident-focused. It is also important to understand the factors that influence the leader's choice.

Table 4.4 below shows two leaders who were dealing with two very similar incidents and yet made two very different decisions. The incident was related to an economic recession that was experienced by both leaders and their respective firms. Based on the leaders' description of the two incidents, both incidents were perceived to be threatening and risky to both the leaders and their firms. I concluded that the recession created a severe threat for both leaders. The two leaders appeared to be susceptible to the threat/risk/danger from the incidents. In spite of the similarities in the incident types, the threat, and their susceptibility, the two leaders made different decisions when dealing with the similar incident. One seemed to be overwhelmed by the incident and hence focused on his fear-related emotions and the other seemed to focus more on dealing with the situation itself.

Table 4.4

Examples of a Similar Incident and Different Leader Decisions

-

The Incident	Severity of threat/risk/danger	Leader susceptibility to threat/danger/risk	LEADER DECISION	
			Fear-related emotions focused	Incident focused
Leader #1 Economic recession	Severe threat based on participant's characterization of incident: "the bottom falling out of our industry," "unlike I'd seen before," "that was the biggest challenge I think I've seen in quite a while."	Leader seemed susceptible: "I had a really strong sense of uncertainty about the - what the future was going to hold."	Less focus on fear-related emotion management	More focus of managing the situation. The participant mentioned: "I ended up having to lay off people that I'd known for twenty years--that was probably the biggest personal challenge in that," "I ended up feeling horrible about it, but I still had a job at the end of the day."
Leader #2 Economic recession	Severe threat based on participant's characterization of incident: "the time I was most frightened was in 1990—in 1989 there was a recession," "I think the fear was because of a threat to identity, not only who I was, but my very existence."	Leader seemed susceptible: "I was gripped where I had absolute anxiety that the firm would go down," "it was sort of spiraling into sort of - well, a deep dread, a fear that was almost immobilizing."	More focus on fear-related emotions management. The participant mentioned "I was feeling overwhelmed by the firm," "the fear was worse than the loss," "I was dealing with the fear by letting go of that which I was frightened of." This leader left his firm.	Decided to eventually leave the situation altogether.

In summary, when faced with a threatening, risky, or dangerous situation leaders may make two fundamentally different choices; one situation or incident focused and the other is fear-related emotions focused. The situation or incident focused choice is about owning the circumstances, taking accountability for achieving the desired goals and coming up with a response for the situation in spite of the circumstances. The fear-related emotions response promotes a physically and/or emotionally protective response designed to help the leader deal with her or his fear-related emotions. Example of this might be blaming others for what happened, denying or ignoring the situation, or panicking. This is essentially the fight, flight or freeze response or choice.

The above sections outlined the sources or stimuli of fear-related emotions, the emotional experience and how fear-related emotions influence decision-making. The next two sections present data on how the participants dealt with or managed their fear-related emotion and the role that courage played in how they managed their fear-related emotions.

Leaders' Strategies to Deal With Fear-Related Emotions

Employing the emotion regulation language, the two choices above can be referred to as antecedent-focused versus response-focused strategies or choices. The emotional regulation model postulates that emotional regulation strategies can be viewed on a temporal continuum where antecedent-focused strategies are employed before the emotional response is fully experienced and response-focused strategies are employed once the emotional experience is in effect. As shown in the second chapter, there are five families of more specific strategies within these two broad strategies. Situation selection (selecting the situation to pay attention to), situation modification (tailoring the situation to modify its emotional impact), attentional deployment (picking which aspect of the situation to focus on) and cognitive change or reappraisal (making meaningful choices of the incident or situation) is all related to antecedent-focused strategies. The fifth option which includes modulation by suppression of the experiential, behavioral, or physiological responses is related to the response-focused strategy.

As an example, Jay initially used response or fear-related emotions-focused strategies to manage his fear-related emotions, which came as a result of his anxiousness over leadership training sessions that he led with 20–30 participants:

> It used to be that before I would do a session as a consultant, as a facilitator, I would be anxious that I would study extensively before the session for—out of sort of fear that I wouldn't know enough, and I would call that sort of self-doubt, and it's a specific fear of not being good enough, not knowing enough, and so I would cram, and read, and feel anxious, and not sleep well the night before. Do I know enough that I know what's on their minds that I can, but that—and those were sort of mini—what I would call mini-panic attacks. I would be looking and I would be anxious.

In this case Jay's fear-related emotions-focused strategy intensified and prolonged his anxiety. The result is that he was experiencing what he called mini-panic attacks. In contrast, over the last seven to eight years, Jay has used a situation-focused strategy where he began, with the help of coaches, to reframe or reappraise the situation differently:

> About ten years ago I started to shift that entirely, and realized that whatever I was going to have to deal with the next day, which I was very anxious about, I only know what I know, and all the cramming, or the reading, or the last-minute sort of hope preparation was just actually making me more nervous because then I started trying to grasp, and trying to remember stuff. So I thought with some help and guidance from some teachers, the actual prepping, one of them Deepak Chopera—if I emptied my mind, and didn't focus on trying to remember, and just was calm, then all of my conscious and subconscious thoughts would be available. So, that would be a strategy I worked out, and has been true for this last seven, eight, or nine years.

It is interesting to share Jay's answer to the question about what has changed for him now where he is able to manage the situation rather than the response. As seen below he credited his level of consciousness or awareness of both the situation and his reaction to it. This is known as reappraisal:

> I think it falls under the heading of awareness, and consciousness, and by being conscious of—specifications enough to notice what's going on, was the trick that really—not the trick, but the mechanism of awareness, if you want, started to allow me to get free, and sometimes when I'm asked that question, and I have a metaphor I use, and so if I have a little video camera, which I don't like to have one, but I don't use it, but I have this video camera, and it has a chance of having a telephoto lens, so it goes really into close-up, right? And if I am really focused with a close-up lens on anything—a flower, or the dog in the yard, or whatever, then my—what I'm really looking at is intense; it's sharp; it's clear; it's also very focused, and I can be either frightened, or in reaction to it. However, if I press the button, and pan it backwards, like to more of a wide angle, I have a wider viewpoint. My context is wider. I see more. I notice more; thereby I notice the context within which the flower exists, or the dog in the yard, yes, I know this context. And I've come to feel like, oh, because if I don't notice what's going on I can't change it. So, awareness for me is pulling that wide angle back, and then I say, 'Well, I now notice, yes, I am frightened, or anxious.'

The story for Ken is different. When he was faced with a threatening, risky or dangerous situation, he chose a situation-focused strategy to manage his emotions:

> But every time, every time within 24 hours, if I couldn't control it (the threatening situation), I just said—it is what it is, what are we going to do about it. We had one layoff at (company name). In the early 1990s there was a recession and we'd been going and going and going and suddenly… What we did there was I sat down with my partner and my wife who was in charge of all our administration people, and we always did every year; we graded everybody A, B, C, D. I said well let's go through and if we need to lay off 20 people, we're going to lay off 35 people and go and get the lowest ranking 35 people, and we laid them off.
>
> I mean, there were times when I would wake up in the middle of the night and I'd be thinking about something. I wasn't thinking about the problem, I was thinking about the solution.

The Role of Courage

Courage came up in several interviews. Some leaders viewed courage as the flip side of fear and others viewed courage as something reserved for heroes. It seemed that courage had a different meaning to the different leaders. Seventy-three percent (11 of the 15 participants) indicated that courage played an important role in managing fear-related emotions. For Jay, courage was very important:

> I think when courage is absolutely required is when we're having fear. It takes courage. I think it does, and it takes—it takes me away from the comfort of having my list of excuses ready all the time.

Cindy also felt that courage was important for her specifically when it came to dealing with the fear of having conversations:

> Meg Wheatley, I think, was the one who framed this thing out about courage as conversation. So I use that. It's like, okay, there's really a courageous communication I have to have today. And what would it mean -- so I have this little saying I got somewhere. It's right here on my desk. It says what is present when I'm doing my best, and what's missing when I struggle?
>
> So sometimes when I need to go into a courageous conversation, I'll ask myself those questions. And usually what I find is what's missing when I struggle is sort of being grounded in that more spacious-loving place, even though there may be hard stuff to deal with. And when I'm struggling, I'm kind of in a contracted fear-based place.

Jeff viewed courage as the opposite of fear. He also commented on the importance of courage when dealing with his fear-related-emotions. Interestingly, Jeff saw his belief and confidence in his ability (self-efficacy) as well as belief in what he was doing (response or strategy-efficacy) as the sources of his courage:

> Well again that's the flip side of fear. It's then when I recognize it sometimes it's just mustering the courage to step into the room or whatever that unpleasant situation is. It still takes courage and that—it goes hand in hand with that idea of confidence that I believe has been built within me but courage is the only way that we can face these—these unknowns and these fears and uncertainties that I'm as well prepared as I can be. I believe I'm doing the right thing for all the right reasons and ah, you know, I believe I have the capability to do this. All of those things kind of combine to give one the courage to do what maybe I didn't think initially I had to do but I maybe wasn't giving myself the credit that—that I in fact can do this.

For Susan, confidence in both herself (self-efficacy) and in the plan (response-efficacy) was linked to courage:

> To have the confidence in myself that I knew how to get people to work together, to bring them on board and say okay, here are some things we can do, you know, and we're all going to have to work together. You know, to have that kind of leadership takes confidence in myself as an individual and a belief that people are going to want to join in and the courage to move forward with it, no question about that.

Susan also viewed her ability to deal with the uncertainty or not knowing if her college would be allowed to occupy a new building as courage:

> To stand in front of a crowd of 250 people, getting ready to cut a ribbon, takes a great deal of courage when you don't even know if you're going to be able to walk in the door.

The presence of risk was an important part of courage to Doug who mentioned that "sometimes courage and the perception of risk go together." This same sentiment of risk and courage was shared by John who mentioned that "I think courage has been a major factor in my life in that I'm not afraid of taking risks." Michael thought that courage relates to taking actions and making good decisions: "I think courage is you have to have it sometimes to move things forward and to make the right decisions." Sam equated courage to being vulnerable:

> It means to act with heart, yes, and I think that's kind of maybe the way I'm thinking I'm trying to do it. You know, which is to be present and to show up and be vulnerable and let whatever's going to happen, happen, but you're there. And people sometimes call that courage.

For Jay, taking accountability for one's results requires courage. Jay made the following point about this link:

> You absolutely need to be really accountable, because I'm talking about putting in this 100% accountability. That is: I have to own all my results, including all the ones I don't like. To get to that place of not needing to be able to bring people just really away from all of the results, moving away from the crutch of the result, and continuing to do this takes courage, because then I can lose accountability, but this is like inverse accountability. Holy smokes, the world opens up, because that ushers in freedom. That is we've said a number of times together and in groups: freedom beckons if I can first be accountable for all my results. And that takes courage. I think it does, and it takes me away from the comfort of having my list of excuses ready all the time.

Don also believes that courage is a big part of overcoming fear-related emotions and that the best way to deal with challenges is to be accountable and to face them head on:

> Courage, yeah. I think that [this is}a huge part of it [accountability].I grew up just believing that when things are tough you just keep putting one foot in front of the other and keep moving forward—basically that the best way to deal with problems is to face them head on.

Glenn also pointed out that it takes courage to overcome fear and act on risky decisions. Since he has been working on the boards of other companies, he pointed to what he has observed many times:

> Companies come up with, well, we know we got to do this, we got to do that. Boy, if we could do this -- or even taking a risk and saying, boy, we could—if we could get into this market, we could be positioned blah-blah-blah, but then fearful of pulling the trigger to—to make the decisions to make that happen, which are sometimes risk investments. That's where people have trouble and that's what takes courage.

Three participants did not see courage as part of how they dealt with or managed fear-related emotions. Merry commented that when she dealt with her own fears and took action, it was about doing her best in the given situation:

> I don't know—some people might consider it courageous. I always just considered it doing the best I could, you know, so I don't think so. I mean, I never thought of it that way. I never thought of it as courage.

This is the same for Ken who mentioned that "I never looked like I'm doing this for the courage to do it." Part of this is how Ken defined courage when he said "I would never do anything so that I looked stronger, looked bigger, looked smarter, more powerful." Later Ken made this comment, which may indicate that he equates bravery with courage:

> I was never in the military but if there was a machine gun box at the top of the hill and I run out and run up the hill and get lucky enough to throw a hand grenade in there, was that courage or was that stupidity?

Ken later admitted to the role of courage in overcoming the fear of starting something brand new in the face of uncertainty about success:

> When I started, well, every one of those, when I took over the public company—when I started (company name), that was courage I guess because I was doing something brand new and didn't know where it was going. Then when they asked me to be CEO of a public company, I'm not a guy get up and rah-rah-rah, and I guess I wondered how am I going to handle these Wall Street guys, they're all egomaniacs. And yet our stock went nuts, I mean, it went so high it was crazy. The Business Daily rated us the best

> investment in the United States two weeks in a row. And yet when I'd go to Wall Street, I was sort of a shy guy. So did it take courage for me to go? Yeah.

Tim did not see a role for courage in how he dealt with his fear-related emotions. For him courage is reserved for heroes. He acknowledged the role of confidence and smarts, which could imply self- and response-efficacy:

> Courage . . . courage, I certainly didn't think of the word. So it is not a word that I think of. I think more about it as smart, smart and self-confident more than courage. Courage to me is sort of almost about taking risks that aren't—that are beyond what rationality would dictate. I always say a hero is a fool who succeeds. You know somebody who did something you really shouldn't have done but you have to be lucky so then we call them a hero.

In summary, Jay was perhaps the most articulate about the role of courage in managing fear-related emotions in the context of leadership when he said:

> I think courage is a huge way to do it and to be able to summon this courage while fearful, well yes, I'm frightened, and I will act anyways. I will summon the courage. I think it says and speaks to what I call character. And it goes to deeper meanings, and some sense of loyalty to a cause higher than me. I apply very much to even higher purpose, by the way, because the notion as long as we're scrabbling around for the pennies and the quarters and the dimes, and sort of playing with the dice and the dirt is one thing, but if we lift our eyes up to a higher purpose in our lives, or in our society, then the possibilities of raising my game up to a higher level of work, and a higher of existence allows me to—it just takes courage, but it allows me to move out of the fear zone, up where that fear—that I am less fearful than ever before, and I think mindfully I might operate mindfully in general 30 or 40% of the time now. The other 60% of the time I work at trying to be mindful, and then there's probably 8, 9, or 10% on the fringe where I lapse into being pissed off, feeling defensive—feeling embarrassed. By the way, feeling embarrassed is easily my worst state, and they're both victim positions. I understand, theoretically, but it's that where in the sense of humiliation. Yep, and that set me free from that was realizing that I was doing that to me. That's the core of being accountable, I think.

Even though vulnerability is often associated with fear or weakness, some participants saw true vulnerability as a sign of strength, authenticity, and courage. In fact Sam expressed this notion when he said "one of the big things I learned was the strength in being vulnerable." Doug also shared his perspective on how vulnerability can be beneficial in dealing with fear-related emotions:

> I have found if you are—are willing to be vulnerable—and to show that you have feelings, you care, you know, that opens communications more with others who hurt like you do, and want to laugh like you do, and worry like you do.

As shown above, leaders had two fundamental choices when it came to dealing with threats, risks and/or danger. One choice is adaptive and more focused on managing the situation or the incident even when experiencing some fear-related emotion. The other is more maladaptive and focused on managing the fear-related emotions. It is important to next assess the factors that influence leaders' choice.

Factors Influencing Leader Decisions

As seen in the prior section, one factor that came up often is leader's self-efficacy. Participants referred to self-efficacy by using the colloquial term "confidence" or by referring to the belief in their abilities. High self-efficacy resulted in situation-focused or adaptive responses and low self-efficacy resulted in emotion-focused or maladaptive responses.

In the example above, when Jay was feeling anxious before leadership training sessions and ended up focused on his fear-related emotions, he referred to self-doubt or a lack of belief in his ability as one of the reasons for his focus on fear-related emotions when he said, "I would be anxious that I would study extensively before the session for—out of sort of fear that I wouldn't know enough, and I would call that sort of self-doubt." In this example the reference to self-doubt is reflection of low self-efficacy.

Another story highlighting both self and response-efficacy was shared by Glenn when he was asked to lead his company's operation in California and the initiative failed due to the 9/11 attacks and the slower economy. He started to lose belief in himself, his ability and the plan:

> So I didn't feel like—I didn't feel like I was failing. I mean, I did and I didn't. I didn't feel like, you know, I'm a loser. I'm just saying, well, you know, maybe—maybe I'm—

> maybe it is me, and maybe I'm just not as good as I thought I was in the abilities that I thought I had, and that's to make good decisions, attract good talent, build the business, things that had been very successful for me.

Jeff provided a strong endorsement of the role an increase in self-efficacy can play in the choice a leader makes when he spoke about how he made the difficult decision to make a risky change in his firm. He decided to pursue combining the president and the CEO roles in his firm and worked with his board of directors to make it happen. This resulted in the involuntary departure of the existing CEO at the time who was his mentor and friend. Jeff mentioned that "two years ago I wouldn't have had the courage to be the driver of change." When I asked him about what has changed, he responded, "It's all about confidence and everything I've done in this last year." Jeff was referring to his participation in an eighteen month leadership development program. As part of the program he received positive feedback from others in his firm about the leadership capabilities that helped raise his self-efficacy. In his interview, Jeff shared that:

> I was clearly different from everybody else in the room. Most of the people came back the night after they got their LSI 360 and they were kind of hanging their head and they couldn't believe, you know, the feedback they got about their, you know, avoidance or aggressive styles. And I had a lot of constructive behaviors that, that people reported and I started to finally have to admit to myself that maybe I should be expecting more out of myself and maybe I should be stepping into this role because apparently everybody else—I called my wife, I said, they think I'm better than I am.

The LSI 360 is a leadership skills inventory or assessment that was used for the participants in the leadership development program.

Another factor reported by some of the participants is leader personality or leader traits. Few participants acknowledged that their personality or personal disposition influenced how they chose to deal with threats, risks and/or dangers. For example, here Tim compares himself to his siblings and how personality relates to confidence:

> couple of my siblings that—that at heart they are lacking that confidence; that when things go bad on the job they constantly worry about will I get fired, does this person really hate me, why are they always after me.

Don described his personality by saying “I’m always optimistic.” Doug also referred to his personality as a key reason for his choices by mentioning “I have learned over the years that I have a very high-risk tolerance” and “my wiring is such that I’m not a—I’m not a great worrier.” Ron on the other hand believes that he is: “I believe I’m risk averse.”

The relationship between leaders and followers is very critical to the effectiveness and success of the leadership process. Emotions and emotional management is one of the critical factors involved in the leader-follower relationship. The type of emotional display chosen by the leader has an influence on how followers perceive a leader’s authenticity and as a result whether followers have a favorable impression of the leader (Gardner et al., 2009). In this next section, the findings related to how leaders share their fear-related emotions with followers are shared.

Leaders’ Fear-Related Emotions and Follower Relationships

The emotional labor concept will be used to classify the expression of emotions by the participants. As shown in the second chapter, leaders have three distinct choices when it comes to displaying or sharing their emotions: surface acting, deep acting and genuine emotions.

When Jay’s firm was dealing with a very difficult recession and the threat of losing the organization altogether, he argued that his choice to use surface or deep acting to hide his fear-related emotions was a valid choice:

> When I was having difficulties with the firm, and my career, and all of my colleagues back—let’s call it 1990 or so. I also had an illness thing going, so I was quite ill at the time, so let’s say that era of really a lot of dread, I chose to keep it to myself, and that—in those days at that time, the odd time I would let out just how concerned I was, I saw how people took on, and sort of their eyes widened when they really realized I was having doubts. So, I think I kept it to myself, and internalized it to my detriment. However, you gave them a role and responsibilities at the time. I think keeping it to yourself as a leader is a valid choice.

When Jay shared how concerned he was, he realized that his followers' own emotions would be affected by his own self-doubt. Instead he decided to show confidence when he was not feeling confident internally. Later, when Jay changed roles and he became the founder of a leadership development firm, he shared his genuine emotions when he was feeling anxious about his performance:

> Because my role later was as a teacher, or a mentor, or sage, or more wise man, I did not keep it to myself. As a matter of fact, when I would be feeling anxious with a group—this was 15 years ago—I would say to the group from a learning perspective, I'm feeling anxious right now, whereas, my vulnerability and my open expression of what's going on for me whether it be confusion, or upset, or gosh, I'm having a moment of fragility, uncertainty. "Well, I better be sharp now, because I might not be good enough." Those kind of internal and mind talk—self-talk—I was posed to a group now for the purposes of them understanding, and me modeling what I consider to be a sense of personal mastery. And it serves them, because then they can say, "Oh, I bet, I've had that happen. I've been driving my car, and the stream will all of a sudden get slippery and soft like in a panic attack; that's what happened." "Oh, I didn't know this." So, there's a huge amount of authentic learning, and some people who are clients of mine really are drawn to it, when they learn a lot about their own situation. They have more of a sort of insight over time.

When Jay shared his genuine emotions, he felt greater trust between him and his followers. One of the benefits of more trust is the ability to co-create:

> The trust level goes up when you can be—when I can be authentic, and open, and vulnerable, and not know, and be willing to risk looking like a fool, and then I think the trust is up, and with the trust I have a chance for a co-creative relationship.

When I asked Jay about what has changed for him from not being able to share his genuine emotions to being willing to be vulnerable in front of a large group, this is what he shared:

> What has changed is my own comfort being me. In other words, my sense of comfort being me. Although it's not particularly all the time by any means, but my willingness to just be me, warts and all, limitations and all, so I'm more comfortable in my own skin. I also have a cosmology, and a sense of what life is about, and the continuum of life. I have a whole kind of way of seeing life now that's been really—really helpful to

> develop. As an example, death is not the opposite of life. The opposite to death is birth, and so some simple awareness -- I know this sounds simple now, but boy I kept to them, and so, I have a different—I call that cosmology. I have that kind—a way of—a framework for life, but within it, and by being vulnerable, I think I am really—can be really an effective teacher. My coaching work just in the last two years has become so much more effective with clients who are really wanting to work. Some clients turn up, and they have no intention of either being vulnerable, or even considering changing their beliefs, and I spot some of those. But on the other hand some folks turn up are really ready to—really ready to go. So, what has happened with me is I think I'm more comfortable in my own skin.

The concept that Jay shared above is a better self-awareness or sense of personal mastery, which is a key driver of the leader's emotional intelligence. Emotionally intelligent leaders tend to be more comfortable with emotional vulnerability.

Merry also kept her fear-related emotions to herself when her life was threatened in a foreign country:

> Well, I think they were sensitive to the situation that I put myself in to be there. In other words, I think that they were appreciative and that they were caring—more caring towards me than you typically would be towards your boss, simply because they knew I was there under duress. I think they were very supportive of me while I was there.

She added that:

> Yeah. I mean, I think it was an unspoken understanding that this was a difficult situation. That I came there under difficult circumstances and I think you didn't really have to say it, you know. I think they showed the support without you having to say it.

Some of the participants, like Ken, shared their fear-related emotions only with a small number of close friends:

> I might have had like with my partner, I mean, I guess if I had issues. I don't know whatever we want to call them. If I had something, I mean, I could talk to my partner or maybe one or two other people. I definitely never let the staff know that there was an issue. No, I kept it to myself. I didn't tell anyone.

On the other hand some participants shared their fear-related emotions with followers. As an example, Cindy shared her anxiety about a funding source coming through for her non-profit organization:

> I told them straight up what was going on. I'm feeling very anxious. I have anxiety in my stomach. But I don't get like this way very often. I'm really worried about this. I'm afraid it's not going to come through. I don't know what's going to happen next. Yeah, I was really up front with people.

Glenn was very clear about his ability to regulate his emotions using surface acting and mostly keep them to himself:

> I could come out of a very tense, emotional meeting with either an employee or just a group of employees and be able to go right into another meeting or going into another—going into a cocktail hour and like nothing was going on. I'm pretty good about that. But I just have always been that way with followers, you know, with people that you could then potentially influence. I just really kept it to myself.

Jeff shared how his emotional vulnerability has helped him build trust with his followers:

> (My) display of vulnerability allows people to trust me and me to show them I place some trust in them and that's been repaid, you know, many times over in terms of the relationships that we've built.

Trust is often a two-way street. It is not just followers trusting the leader, but also the leaders having a few followers that he or she can trust. John spoke of his loneliness when his wife passed away and he did not have friends who he could share his emotions openly with during a time when he was worried about changing companies:

> But I had many, many sleepless nights. And, unfortunately, I didn't have anybody to talk to about it. When you have such a tight relationship with your spouse, then you can talk, and then they can listen and reflect things back to you. But as much as I love my children, I don't have that relationship with my children. And my relationship with (wife's name) was so insular, it was very—it was wonderful but it was insular—that I only had a couple good friends that I could talk to about that. And, unfortunately, both of them died within six months of (wife's name).

Self-image could be an important part of the sharing of emotional experience. Popular culture bestows an image of strength and confidence on leaders. Similarly, the common image of the leader as strong and invulnerable leads to a negative view of leaders who show emotional vulnerability. Susan shared the image that people had of her:

> I never said those words (I am afraid or worried). I would never. That's just not a part of who I am. And people know that because as I've gone from one place to the other, they know that I come in and fix things and clean it up or whatever. They know that I get it done. And so that reputation kind of precedes me.

Take the challenge of accreditation that Susan was helping one college overcome: deep down Susan knew that as a leader she cannot totally control the outcome and yet on the outside she was not willing to show that she was concerned:

> While I'm saying, you know, we are going to get our accreditation, there isn't going to be any question about it, actually I'm not the one that makes that decision. It is an accrediting body of 21 people.

One of the challenges for leaders who do not like to share their fear-related emotions is that followers are often able to tell when a leader is worried by watching the leader's body language. Sam shared how his assistant could always tell when he was worried or anxious about an issue:

> Like I tell you, I was so shocked every time I would get one of these sleepless nights things, I'd walk in, my assistant would look at me and say—what's wrong? [Laughter] Every time, and I would have thought I had it covered up.

Even though Chris mentioned "So I didn't feel my anxiety was their problem, it was my problem." Similarly, his employees could tell how he was feeling without him sharing his fear-related emotions. This was the case for Chris when he was dealing with the loss of a key staff member and the fear that others might follow:

> When this one employee left, one of the folks that was involved in this brought me a beautiful bottle of wine, said, "I'm so sorry you have to go through the turmoil that this is going to cause." They could tell what was going on for sure.

For Sam being vulnerable plays a key role in his ability to openly share his fear-related emotions:

> That's what I'm saying, I look at myself and there are a lot of strands to this. I wouldn't downplay for myself anyhow, this 25 years of opening myself up and realizing, coming to the conclusion, that the idea of being vulnerable to people—and so I tend to just act

> that way all day long. You see, it's not like I say—okay, let me be vulnerable now. I tend to sort of—and people know that, they know that when I talk I just sort of say everything, you know, I don't hold back. And if I made a mistake, I'm just real clear I made a mistake. So I just live in that place with people, of being more of an open book about who I am.

Michael was also willing to be vulnerable and open with his emotions "Yeah. I think so (willingness to be vulnerable about showing feelings). You know I . . . I am a pretty open person, pretty transparent I would say."

Some leaders such as Don are naturally upbeat and seldom feel or show fear-related emotions. He mentioned that there was nothing to hide when it came to his emotions:

> I don't try and hide my emotions. You know, and that said, everyone who knows me will tell you that I'm a very optimistic, upbeat person. So even when things are bad I'll tell you that I believe—you know, in fact the talk that I gave about (former CEO name)—in his last state to the company address which was right in the middle of the recession had a picture of a huge storm on the horizon and the scene from The Perfect Storm with the boat, you know, almost vertical on the waves. And my take on that is when the ocean's like that it's a great time to go surfing because—because that's when the opportunities are created. When there's a lot of disruption is when there's opportunity. So I'm always a glass half-full kind of guy.

Doug only shared his fear-related emotions with his wife and people outside work:

> I have always shared with her my ups and downs. That's been an important factor. And look, I have people outside the business that I can share these things with socially—other CEOs and other businesses that we can offload on each other is a very important stress reliever as well.

Ron shared his emotions only with close friends:

> Well, my intimate partners, the ones that were closest to me—both physically, and time-wise, they knew. Again, I'm a terrible poker player. You know, most people can—can read me like a book, and I don't –I haven't found that to be a disadvantage in life. I have found if you are willing to be vulnerable—and to show that you have feelings, you care, you know, that opens communications more with others who hurt like you do, and want to laugh like you do, and worry like you do, etc. So, that's the way I'm wired. So, I think my partners did know, even those that were further away that this was a hurtful situation for me and it would have some impact on our relationship going forward.

Tim also shared:

> I would say two of my key people that we had very open discussions about this and in a way talked about listen, we should not be ruled too much by our fear. We have to think about are we doing this because it is reasonable or are we doing this because we just don't want to get yelled at. So I feel we . . . I don't need to discuss it with 10 people.

Most participants kept their fear-related emotions to themselves and often faked positive or neutral emotional expressions to their followers. One of the research questions is about the impacts fear-related emotions have on leaders' health and well-being. In the next section, data on the impacts of fear-related emotions on the participants' health and well-being are presented and classified by the severity of the impact from major to mild to little or no impact. The section that follows presents data on how the participants managed or dealt with the health impacts of fear-related emotions.

The Impact of Fear-Related Emotions on Leaders' Health and Well-Being

While it's extremely difficult to separate the role of fear-related emotions on leaders' health from other factors such as stress, age and normal health issues, it was important to ask this group of leaders their thoughts on the role of fear-related emotion on their own health and well-being. The effect of fear-related emotions on the participants' health varied. Three of the 15 participants (20%) experienced major health impacts. Ten of 15 participants (67%) experienced mild health issues, and two of the 15 participants (13%) of participants experienced none to mild health impacts or issues.

Major health impacts. Few participants experienced serious or major health impacts. Some of these impacts were considered life threatening. For example and by Jay's own admission "I was literally scaring myself into an illness." Jay's worries, anxieties and fears over an economic recession and the possibility of losing his firm resulted in sleepless nights. To deal with a lack of sleep, Jay turned to sleep aids. The result was a major illness that almost killed Jay:

> And it's all-consuming, and I think that it did lead to—well, the complications I had when I contracted a problem, a health problem called EMS, eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome, and it was from eating a tainted product, and essentially it was poisoning my nervous system. Still I had this really big problem, and I do think that the onset of that was triggered in part—but it certainly was simultaneous with this dread at the time.
>
> The same two months that I contracted EMS, people were dying of it, so it was a fatal illness. So, I sort of looking back think, you know, in a way there's certainly no accident.
>
> EMS resulted from eating a tainted health food, and the tainted health food was L-tryptophan. L-tryptophan is supposed to be an inert amino acid to help you sleep.

In Jay's mind there is a clear link between the lack of sleep, the illness and fear-related emotions:

> I took it (the health food) in order to sleep. Why wasn't I sleeping? Because I was so fucking worried about—worried about (the recession and losing the firm)—that's the linkage.

Merry also dealt with serious health challenges which she attributed to fear-related emotions as a result of her CEO role in a new startup company which relied on investor financing:

> When I ran (the startup company) and I went there and a bunch of people had put their money in there, a bunch of investors, and said, "We want you to grow this business." You know, running a startup company, I liken to running a jet plane down the runway at full throttle and it's either going to take off or crash from one minute to the next and you're not sure which. You've got all these people's money and all these people that are depending upon you to make it successful. And I'd say that was a really hard time for me. First of all, going from a big company to a startup company was an adjustment, but going from southern California to New York was another adjustment. I did have some significant health problems during that time and I think it was fear, stress, you know, having what you feel like is the weight of the world even though it isn't the weight of the world on your shoulders. When you look back on it, you go, "It wasn't really the weight of the world, but it was a lot of people's money, you know." And so yeah, I would say that it has caused health problems.

When asked about the specifics of the health challenge, Merry painfully mentioned:

> Uh, well, you know, nothing I won't live through. [Laughter] I jokingly say I left a lung in Rochester because I got pulmonary fibrosis while I was running that company. I joke and I say, "Well, I left my lung in Rochester." [Laughter]

Susan was a leader who prided herself on her ability to fix problems. She referred to herself as the person who went from place-to-place to fix troubled educational organizations. She was also someone who did not believe in the use of fear though she has reluctantly admitted to experiencing some worries and anxieties. Susan's response to my question about the impact of fear-related emotions on her health and well-being was very interesting:

> Well yes, it did take a big toll on me. I had a heart attack in March 2010 and I retired September 30, 2010. But there's no, at least among my family, there is no question but what the incident and the work that I had done took a very heavy personal toll. And then as I've talked to other people, I mean I'm a high cortisol person, high energy person, and very determined and very perseverant and that puts a toll on your body. And so, yes, I did pay a price. I didn't pay a price at the exact time that those things were happening but it caught up to me and I paid the price. I had a stent put in in March 2010.

For the first time in our interview, Susan admitted to being scared as a result of the heart attack incident, which she viewed as a big wake-up call:

> Well no, it (the heart attack) was a big wake-up. It was a very big wake-up call, yes. I mean it was pretty scary actually.

For John the threat of a heart attack seemed real when he responded to my question about the effects of fear-related emotions on his health and well-being:

> I do a trip a year, and (his wife's name) and I had always done a trip a year. And last year my brother had asked me if I was going to do a trip. And I said I wanted to go to Scotland backpacking for a couple weeks. He said, well, I'll go with you. So we were down along the coast near a castle, and it was beautiful. And he said, do you know why I'm here? And I looked at the castle, I looked at the ocean, and I was like, okay, because it's a beautiful spot.
>
> He goes, no, bud, you're going to die. You're going to end up with a heart attack. He says, 1) you're overweight. You've never been one to be overweight. Now you're overweight. 2) You're drinking heavily. You're not even hiding it anymore. And 3) you're under so much stress that you don't even recognize you're under stress anymore. And he said, all of those three things are a heart attack. You're going to end up dropping dead in some airport somewhere as you're going from plane to plane. And everybody is going to say, yeah, we saw it coming. Well, I got to tell you, I don't want to be the guy that says, I saw it coming and I didn't say anything to you.

> So I told him he was an asshole and he should mind his own business. But he was right. And so I said if I continue on this path that's the way it's got to be.

Mild health impacts. When asked about the impacts of fear-related emotions on their health, ten of the participants shared relatively mild impacts. These impacts included headaches or migraines, loss of sleep, loss of appetite, stomach nerves, and being preoccupied with issues.

Cindy who was dealing with the impacts of one of her firm's employees having an improper physical relationship with a high school student shared this reaction to the anxieties and worries which came from how this incident might damage her firm's reputation given that her non-profit organizations is helping people deal with domestic violence issues:

> Well, I remember feeling sick to my stomach about it. I remember feeling shocked. I remember feeling betrayed. I remember feeling disgusted. Because not only did he do all these things, but this was even more disgusting. We have a large building and upstairs we have group rooms, and up there is a couch. And he took this young woman into San Francisco to go dancing and apparently created a way to have alcohol. She was under age. She was, like, 16 years old.

Both Doug and Ron dealt with headaches and migraines. Doug mentioned, "There was certainly stress, but I literally in my career, suffered from migraines" and Ron mentioned "the weak spot in my system seemed to be: I got lots of headaches, not the kind that are migraines or anything, but just tension; they were tension headaches."

Several participants mentioned lack of sleep and staying awake at night worrying about an issue as one of the health impacts. Lack of sleep is known to cause other health issues in people. For instance, Ken experienced sleeplessness in order to find solutions: "there were times when I would wake up in the middle of the night and I'd be thinking about something."

Little or no impact. Two of the fifteen participants (13%) mentioned that fear-related emotions had little impact on their health and well-being. These two participants seemed to be very open about their emotions and had been through emotional intelligence training. To illustrate their response to my question about health and well-being, I will share Jeff's response:

> I honestly don't think that it did (fear-related emotions having an effect on his health and well-being). I think it put me in closer touch with my emotions. It made me more understanding of what makes me tick. I don't think there were any negative ramifications of it. You know the only—the only negative ramification on my health lately has just been, you know, the amount of additional time I need to put into figuring out of these two roles has sort of impacted any physical fitness regimen that I had. So I kind of fell off the fitness wagon about nine or ten months ago. I really know I need to get back on and take care of myself and I think that will come. But that really wasn't tied to any of the emotional issues that were going on. I think I've fared pretty well in that department.

Managing Leaders' Health and Well-Being

Next, the participants were asked about their ways of managing their health and well-being. There were several strategies used by these leaders.

For example, Jay worked on self-development by joining group sessions with people who were dealing with life challenges:

> I hit some groups. I did a study with Ben Wong, and some Jacque McKeen groups, and I joined a men's group that was—it had to do with burned out professionals. It was entitled "The Failure of Success." And so, I got into some conversation groups with people who were also hitting the wall. And these were not addiction groups, not like alcoholics groups, or whatever. It was people who had really become empty.

Jay also mentioned letting go of the causes of his fear-related emotions as one strategy. Losing or letting go of his firm, which in turn meant losing his house and other positions, is what liberated him:

> But mainly what I think I did is I let go of the firm, and I decided to let it go, and it meant no house and renting, and my being somehow—living on my boat or something, and that's what I did.

Upon further reflection, Jay realized that this meant his expectation of himself and others expectations of him had to change:

> I never thought of this before—but what it is, is changing the expectations of myself, by both me, and by others. I had to get free like that to find a decompression chamber called my life, where I can go, and become anonymous for a while. I never thought of that till now.

Merry mentioned that she did not manage the impacts on her well-being very well because she is dealing today with the health effects:

> Not well. [Laughter] Not well. You know, I just kind of kept going and, you know, tried to adjust, didn't adjust very well in favor of my health, which I suffer for now. But, you know, it's—I don't know. Sometimes you just make the wrong decisions and in this case, I would say I made the wrong decision to just keep pushing and not, you know, not give in to some of the health issues that I was having.

Several of the participants mentioned physical exercise as the way they managed their health and well-being. Ken mentioned, "I worked out. I have been using a trainer now, same guy, for 15 years." This was also the case for Michael who said, "Exercise has been a pretty important factor for me to de-stress and get my mind off work." The same for Tim when he said "I pay more attention to physical exercise in times such as that." For others, exercise was often combined with other activities. For example, Ron mentioned:

> Then in combination with the exercise, I now have been doing an hour a day of yoga and stretching exercises before I go for a run or a cycle. So the combination has been very powerful.

This was similar for Cindy who mentioned diet, exercise and downtime:

> In terms of my personal life, whether how clean I keep my diet, whether I'm exercising, whether I'm using my downtime, I think I will say that as I've aged, I've done a much better job on all those fronts.

Ron discussed the support he got from his wife and how that helped him see the connection between mental and physical health:

> It was 30 years ago, which was very, very important for me and with the help of my wife who also saw the impact it had, she was very helpful and supportive in helping counsel and encourage me to understand the connection between my mental health and physical health. Of course now there is a very study that of course is so connected that we now believe that most illnesses have a mental origin—which may include cancer, some cancers in the future.

In his response, Doug mentioned the connection between his swimming workout and breathing techniques commonly used for meditation:

> I swim for exercise. I've been doing it for 40 years. I still swim three times a week, and that is a great stress management; it doesn't matter whether you swim, or play baseball, or what you do, but you need to do something. For me it's swimming, and there's something about the—some would say the monotony, but you know, it's when you swim there's a regular breathing exercise, or you can't swim. You swim distances; you get into a very regular breathing pattern, and what I've learned since then is, you know, I may have gotten some of that stress relief if I had just sat in a chair, and done the deep breathing that is involved with swimming. But there's a physical release, too, when you work your body. So yes, swimming has been my regular thing, and I'm active in other sports, but that's the one thing that I just—I do.

For Ron faith and his religious beliefs are also important to his ability to manage his health:

> I have to say faith has been a piece of what has made it possible for me to deal with things that come along in life that one would have avoided, if they could. Well, I guess I have to tell you one other thing. I was raised in the church, so this wasn't something I discovered late in life.

Glenn used outside activities such as fishing to take his mind off job worries and stresses:

> But if you can go out and go fishing, where you got to pay attention to casting and doing all these other things and putting on gear and getting off gear, or you can ride a motorcycle, or you can do this or you can do that, then you have a way to kind of distract your mind.

The role of a trusted advisor(s) or someone whom the leader can talk with in confidence about the challenges and their feeling was also mentioned by Tim:

> Well I think…I think the fact that I could talk about it, that I have a very supportive wife; I think that is absolutely critical. Having a very supportive spouse. I don't know how people do these jobs without a spouse, you know. A spouse who you can talk to.

Susan reflected back on what she should have done to manage her health and well-being. Getting more sleep would be the one thing she would have done differently. It is important to note that lack of sleep was mentioned very frequently by all the participants. In Susan's case she ended up with a heart attack that she luckily survived:

> I might have tried to get a little more rest. You know, I was living on like four hours of sleep with the Berkeley City thing especially. There would be times when if my husband and I went out to dinner on a Friday or Saturday night, we would go by the college at ten

> or eleven o'clock at night because I had crews working 24-hours a day after we moved into the building trying to get things finished. I think if I were to do something different I probably would have tried to figure out a way to get more sleep.

Susan also wished she did more of these good habits back before her heart attack:

> I have a lot of massage work done. I see an herbalist and have acupuncture work done. I think if I were to do things different I would have been doing those things during all of these crises and I think that would have helped a great deal.

Cindy mentioned that thinking about why she was doing her job and the bigger purpose behind her role helped her better manage her well-being on the job:

> You know what it is? Yeah, this is the deal for me. I feel it is such an honor to get paid for what I do, and I have helped move the needle on a really major social problem, not only in this country but around the globe. And to know that we're making change, we're creating—slowly shifting the paradigm of what historically has been acceptable in terms of the treatment of women and girls into new standards, new public policy. I helped change the national—created the national legislation that's now in place in the Violence Against Women Act.
>
> And so there's barely a day that I don't on my drive here—I know some day this will not be my work anymore. I will not be here. And in the meantime, I think it's an honor to get paid for what I do. I just have believed that for a very long time.

The fifteen leaders who participated in this study used a number of strategies to manage the impacts of fear-related emotions on their health and well-being. In summary they used the following strategies:

A. Relaxation techniques

   These included meditation, reaching out to family and trusted friends, physical exercise, yoga, massage, acupuncture and getting away on sporting outings or camping.

B. Understanding and addressing the deeper psychological issues

C. Remembering the higher purpose of the job or role

D. Changing unhealthy habits

Summary

This chapter began by presenting the 15 research participants and their background so that the reader can situate the incidents within the participants' context. All of the 15 participants (12 males and 3 females) were executive leaders of organizations (12 for-profit and 3 non-profit) with executive leadership experience between 1 to 45 years leading consulting engineering firms, financial consulting company, education institutions and not for profit community services firm. The coding of the research data using NVivo and the resulting themes were presented next. The first theme was related to the sources and types of fear-related stimuli reported by the participants. These stimuli were classified along two types. The first type was related external environment stimuli such as economic or market downturn, political and regulatory issues. These were stimuli originating in the environment external to the organizations where these leaders practiced leadership. The second type of stimuli of fear-related emotions was related to the internal environment with three sub-types. The first were at the organizational level such as mergers and acquisitions, leadership or ownership succession and organizational change, the second related to the employees of the organization (i.e. employees turnover) and the third related to the leaders themselves (i.e. role change, difficult conversations and personal loss).

Next, this chapter presented the emotional experience of the participants when they were exposed to stimuli of fear-related emotions. Participants' experience with fear-related emotions was presented by the types of fear-related emotions experienced (fear, anxiety, worry, concern, fright, dread, etc.), the intensity of the experience using the scale of low to severe intensity and types of fears experienced with the biggest being the fear of not knowing enough and fear of the unknown. Data presented in these sections addressed the nature of participants experience with fear-related emotions. Next, data showing how the participants managed or dealt with their fear-related emotions was presented along with the participants view on the role courage played in how they dealt with their emotions. Most of the participants agreed that courage had an important role.

The role fear-related emotions played in the participants' decision-making, relationship with followers and their health was presented next. Fear-related emotions influenced leaders to make adaptive decisions when leader efficacy was strong and maladaptive decisions when efficacy beliefs were weak. Most leaders suppressed their fear-related emotions when interacting with followers and leaders who suppressed their emotions had more serious and negative health impacts than the one who were able to express their emotions. These data findings were based on the research participants' incidents and stories. I will begin the next chapter by providing a detailed summary of the above data along the research questions and elaborate further on the key research findings.

Summary, Discussion, and Implications

This chapter summarizes the research process, presents findings including review of the research themes, and answers to the research questions. Then, a discussion on the relationship between stimuli and leader characteristics is presented with a focus on the factors that lead to adaptive versus maladaptive responses. This is followed by how leaders can build their own capacity to adaptively handle the intense leadership context of today's world. The final section of this chapter presents implications for theory, practice and future research as well as key conclusions.

Summary of the Research Process

As a practitioner and current CEO of a consulting engineering company with over 900 employees, my views on leadership are informed by both practice and theory. I approached this research study as a practitioner-researcher (Jarvis, 1999). I had the privilege of interviewing fifteen practitioners who served in formal executive leadership roles, mainly CEOs, about their experience with fear-related emotions. When I began my doctoral study in leadership, I had a curiosity about the differences between the practice and theory of leadership. One of these differences relates to how leadership and leaders are portrayed in theory versus the reality of practice. More specifically, theory tends to advocate a view of leadership and leaders that focuses on vision, transformation, and charisma among others. At times, this focus painted leaders, especially CEOs, as super human with hero-like characteristics. At the same time, my personal practice of leadership is far from only those aspects. While leadership often comes with accomplishments, joys, and moments of ecstasy, leadership also often comes with risks, threats and dangers. Leaders experience sorrows, disappointments, fears and many other emotions. Yet there are very few leadership theories or studies to help practitioners understand and manage these emotions. This lack of attention to this aspect of leadership was also mentioned by one of the participants in my study. When I asked Tim to share any last thoughts about fear-related emotions, he spoke about the need for studies on this topic:

> The question of how can people create safe zones where they can talk about this (fear-related emotions). There is not a lot of coverage of this in the leadership literature. Certainly I went to a three, four day training program for presidents at Harvard then I went two years ago to a training program for experienced presidents to kind of think about where you are at now, what are you going to do your next round. I don't remember this issue ever coming up at all. So it seems to me at least worth an hour's discussion so that people can at least be alert to it.

The purpose of this research was to address this need and thus to better understand leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. The research analyzed the experience of 15 leaders with critical incidents involving threats, risks and/or danger. How these leaders managed their fear-related emotions; the role of courage, as well as the impact of fear-related emotions on leaders' decision-making; the impact on leaders' relationships with followers; and the impact on leaders' health and well-being were examined by this research. Given the contextual and experiential nature of this study, it was accomplished within a qualitative research paradigm. The selection of a qualitative orientation as the most appropriate research method for this study was supported by Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003), Bryman (2004) and Conger (1998). Specifically, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) was used due to the method's ability to capture both participants' emotional and behavioral experiences.

The literature review focused on understanding fear-related emotions from both a psychological and biological perspective including relevant theories and the nature of stimuli, leaders' experience with fear-related emotions, the impacts of these emotions on decisions, relationships and well-being, and the role of courage. While there were scant studies available of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, the literature highlighted that the practice of leadership does subject leaders to stimuli that induces emotional reactions, including fear-related emotions. The literature also showed that leaders often mask these emotions and hence experience stress which impacts their health and well-being.

Following is a summary of the themes that emerged and answers presented to the following research questions:

The central research question was: *How do organizational leaders experience fear-related emotions?*

The focus of this research question was on the type of threatening, risky and/or dangerous incidents or situations which gave rise to fear-related emotions and how leaders managed these threats, incidents and situations. Did they choose to do nothing about the threat and focus mainly on managing their fear-related emotions? In other words, did they choose to neglect to deal with the threat or situation itself? Did they choose to adapt to the situation or threat in the face of feeling afraid? Was there another course of action available to them? Why did they make whichever choice?

Several sub-questions or sub-themes were also explored to help better understand the relationship between fear-related emotions and leadership.

First, what was the influence of fear-related emotions on leader decision-making? Here the impact of fear-related emotions on leaders' abilities to make decisions is presented: specifically, what types of decisions were made and why?

Second, how did leaders manage their fear-related emotions and what was the role of courage? This question explored the strategies used by leaders to manage their emotions and to better understand how leaders invoked courage in the face of threatening or fearful situations.

Third, how did fear-related emotions affect leaders' relationships with followers? The focus was on the impact of fear-related emotions on leader relationships with their followers and to what extent leaders showed or shared their fear-related emotions with followers. In essence, what level of emotional authenticity or vulnerability was experienced in the context of the relationship?

Fourth, how did fear-related emotions impact leaders' health and well-being? It seemed that when leaders experienced fear-related emotions they were likely to experience at least some stress. The question was designed to better understand how fear-related emotions might have impacted the well-being of leaders given the potential for very stressful emotional states.

Review of Themes Along With the Research Questions

Question: How do organizational leaders experience fear-related emotions? Before answering this central research question, the type of fear-related emotions experience covered by this study is delineated including a definition of fear-related emotions experiences based on the research data. Next, the type of stimuli that give rise to fear-related emotions and a few important characteristics of both the stimuli and leaders themselves, such as threat severity, threat susceptibility, leader-efficacy and response efficacy, are outlined. Lastly, the experience with fear-related emotions is shared including its intensity and duration and types of fears experienced by participants.

The Types of Experiences of Fear–Related Emotions Covered by the Study

As mentioned in the second chapter, there is a wide divergence in the definition of emotions among researchers (e.g., see Frigida, 1994, and Solomon, 2003). According to Fehr and Russell (1984), "Everyone knows what an emotion is, until asked to give a definition, then it seems, no one knows" (p. 464). LeDoux (2015) highlighted the importance of language and its meaning in psychological research. He further suggested that in everyday language the words feelings and emotions are used interchangeably. LeDoux used the two terms (emotion and fear) to refer to "the mental states that people experience when they face situations which survival is challenged or enhanced" (p. 98). For the purpose of clarity about the phenomena being studied and its characteristics, I wanted to be explicit about the definition of fear-related emotions experiences covered by this study.

The experiences with fear-related emotions that were the subject of this study pertains to self-reports of conscious and subjective experiences of inner feelings of fear-related emotions in response to real or perceived threatening, risky or dangerous stimuli from the external or internal organizational context. Words used by the participants to categorize and label fear-related emotions experiences included: afraid, anxious, worried, concerned, alarmed, scared, panicked, terrified, dread, frightened, freaked, terrorized, intimidated, troubled, nervous, careful, trepidation, creepy, premonition, and quivering.

In this regard, participants' self-reports were used to assess the properties of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, to qualitatively assess more of the semantic self-knowledge of the emotional experience as augmented by episodic self-knowledge through the use of the critical incident technique, and to assess the recall of specific personal incidents or experiences. For a detailed discussion of the use of self-reports of emotions and the difference between semantic and episodic knowledge see Robinson and Clore (2002b).

Stimuli of Fear-Related Emotions

To better understand the fears, anxieties and worries of executive leaders, the participants were asked to share incidents that they considered to be threatening, dangerous and/or risky. It is important to note that while all the research participants reported risky, threatening and/or dangerous stimuli, not all the participants reported experiencing fear-related emotions from the incidents they reported. It was the aim of this study to understand which incidents did and which did not invoke fear-related emotions and why from both the leader and the incident perspectives—that is to understand what it is about the incident and about the leader that results in fear-related emotions experience.

Consistent with Duncan (1972), characteristics of the internal and external organizational environments as sources of perceived certainty were used to classify the stimuli. The following stimuli types were identified:

1. External Environment Stimuli
    - 1.1 Economic or market events
        - 1.1.1 Loss of a major project or program
        - 1.1.2 Economic downturn and/or recession
        - 1.1.3 Funding risk or uncertainty
        - 1.1.4 Economic Uncertainty
        - 1.1.5 Losing the organization
        - 1.1.6 Loss of key clients
        - 1.1.7 Drop in stock market
        - 1.1.8 Increased market competition
    - 1.2 Regulatory or legal events
        - 1.2.1 Legal risk or threat
        - 1.2.2 Changes in regulations
        - 1.2.3 Legal action (being sued)
    - 1.3 Political incidents
        - 1.3.1 Physical threat to leader's life
        - 1.3.2 Union contract negotiations
2. Internal Environment Stimuli
    - 2.1 Organization-wide events
        - 2.1.1 Potential loss of the organization
        - 2.1.2 Threat to brand or reputation
        - 2.1.3 Mergers and acquisitions
        - 2.1.4 Risks of starting new business, venture, or service
        - 2.1.5 Ownership succession
        - 2.1.6 Leadership succession or transition
        - 2.1.7 Unsatisfactory financial performance
        - 2.1.8 Organizational change
    - 2.2 Employee-related incidents
        - 2.2.1 Involuntary turnover (losing employees due to lack of work)
        - 2.2.2 Voluntary turnover (losing key employees)

2.3 Leader-related incidents
- 2.3.1 Roles change or loss
- 2.3.2 Difficult conversations
- 2.3.3 Public speaking
- 2.3.4 Personal loss or threat of loss (i.e., losing a family member)
- 2.3.5 Betraying loyalties

Leaders focused on or paid more attention to internal organizational challenges where the majority of the stimuli (71%) came from the internal organizational context and from within leaders themselves. By contrast, 29% of the stimuli mentioned by the leaders were external to the organization. Almost half (46%) of the internal stimuli were related to organization-wide threats such as the threat of loss or the risk of failure of the organization itself, mergers and acquisition risks or dangers, ownership and leadership succession risks, poor performance threats, and organizational change threats. More than half (64%) of the external environment threats came from economic or market events.

The list of threatening, risky and or dangerous stimuli above is consistent with and is supported by findings from other research. For example, Bowman (1986) conducted research about the concerns of CEOs, interviewing 26 CEOs across a number of industries, and offered conclusions that support findings from this study. He suggested that economic activities, politics, markets and hierarchies highlight some of the major concerns for CEOs; however hierarchies, which are internal to the organization, were mentioned the most by the CEOs. Given the emphasis on hierarchies, Bowman (1986) also suggested that CEOs focused more on internal concerns such as employee concerns, than on concerns outside the organization; however, issues and concerns do spill across each other and are interdependent. While the study by Sutherland and Cooper (1995) was more focused on chief executive lifestyle stress, it also offered support for some of the stimuli on the above list from the current study. Specific to the role of fear in the economy and markets, Read (2009) suggested that fear plays a key role in economic and market cycles.

Using the principles of affective events theory (AET), Ashton-James and Ashkanasy (2008) categorized the sources of organizational affective events to three sources that were similar to the categories generated by the current study. The first is organizational changes, which include downsizing, mergers, job redesign and organizational restructuring. In essence these are internal context threats. They propose that economic, legal, political, technological or socio-cultural events pose real or perceived threats to the organization and its members. The second source of threats is economic, legal and political events, which are referred to as extra-organizational events by Ashton-James and Ashkanasy. The third source is inter-organizational negotiation, which is a reference to the negations around preferences and goals of the different organizational parties.

Furthermore, in reviewing the above list and drawing from scholarly literature, a few general observations can be made about these incidents and about the related stimuli:

A. The majority of the incidents shared reflected the uncertainty in the external and internal leadership context currently. Consistent with Johansen (2012), these incidents highlighted the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) that leaders have to navigate today which makes this research important and relevant to the study of leadership and change.

B. The stimuli were often interdependent and not discrete wherein one stimulus may have led to several others as its consequence. For example, a recession might have led to the loss of business and in turn to loss of jobs and of employees which in turn led to the risk of losing the organization and that may have resulted in the leader losing their role or position. This spoke to the complexity of the leadership context and to the complexity of the events that take place in the mind, emotions and behavior as well as the dynamic nature of cause and effect (Lazarus, 2006). Some leadership scholars have long recognized and argued for the sensitivity of leadership to the multitude of interconnected contextual factors (e.g., Lord, Brown, Harvey, & Hall, 2001).

C. The risks, dangers or threats varied in severity. Some were very serious and others were less so. For example, a recession could be deep and/or long which often meant a severe contextual threat. It also could be short and mild which meant less severity. Duration of any stimuli can also be short or long. Independent of how a leader appraised them, stimuli themselves varied in severity due to contextual factors. The severity of stimulus was a factor in the susceptibility of leaders to a given threat, risk, or danger. This is consistent with findings from the Extended Parallel Protection Model (EPPM) and fear appeal theory (Witte, 1992, 1998).

D. Most of the incidents, if not all, represented what would be characterized as complex adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994). These are challenges wherein neither the problem nor the solution or both are well defined and hence require learning and experimentation. Complex adaptive challenges like these are fertile for uncertainty and complexity, which makes them stimuli for fear-related emotions.

E. These are not the only sources of threats, risks or danger for leaders. Threatening stimuli can be imagined or perceived and not real in either the external or internal environment. There might be other stimuli within the leader or personal sources that are either innate or learned fears. This is consistent with fear, anxiety and worry literature (Borkovec, 1994; Freeston et al., 1994; Gray, 1987). This current study did not focus on these types of stimuli; however, once fear-related emotions are invoked, leaders' experience is likely to be similar in nature.

Assessment of Threats, Risks, or Dangers

The data along with the reviewed literature pointed to a process leaders went through to assess the stimuli and their response to it. The first is a threat assessment that includes both its severity and whether they perceive themselves to be susceptible to it. The second is an assessment of leader's capabilities to respond to the threat in terms of both their belief in their ability to devise an adequate response and their belief in the response itself and its ability to address the threat. The following section discusses each of these assessments in more depth.

Stimuli and threat severity. In reviewing the participants' data, severity of threat, risk or danger, collectively called threats, might be objectively rated as low, medium, high or extreme. This rating is consistent with ratings used by the Daily Inventory of Stressful Events (DISE) for measuring daily stressful events (Almeida, Wethington, & Kessler, 2002). Objectivity in threat ratings is related to the assessment of the severity of the threat by the different individuals. In general, these ratings can be correlated to the intensity of the stimulus and to its duration where intense and long threats often result in extreme severity and low intensity and short duration stimuli result in low severity. Take for example the recent economic recession, which was considered an external environment stimulus. It started in 2007 and ended in 2009 according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics and was considered one of the deepest and longest recessions in U.S. history. This stimulus was considered intense and lengthy and therefore was a source of high to extremely severe threat. On the other hand, a stimulus related to facilitating a training session was intense, but short in duration as reported by one of the participants. In this case the stimulus was assumed to exert high to medium severity. Taken all together, fear-related emotions can be evoked by a threat that is severe enough and personally relevant. Personal relevancy or susceptibility to threats will be discussed next.

Figure 5.1 shows a conceptual relationship between the intensity and duration of stimuli to threat severity.

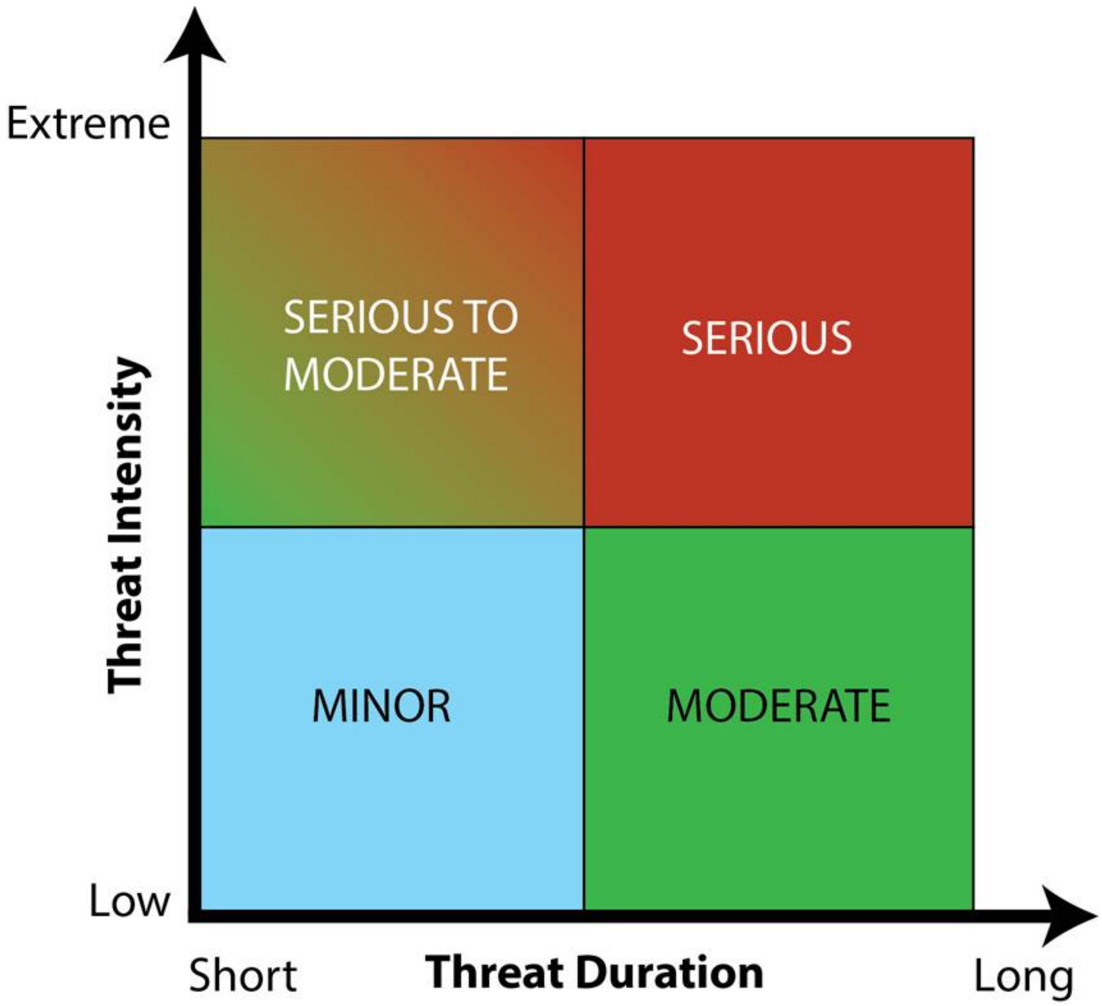

Figure 5.1. Threat/risk/danger severity.

Figure 5.2 shows a simplified version of the levels of severity from a given threat based on the intensity and duration.

Figure 5.2. Levels of severity.

Susceptibility to the threat. As mentioned above, threat severity was not sufficient on its own for the threat to be perceived as real. Personal differences among other factors influenced whether a given participant was susceptible to a given threat. What is threatening to one individual may not be threatening to another. For example, a few of the participants referred to their personality traits as having an influence on their ability to deal with threats. Specifically, when I asked Doug to share an incident where he felt the situation as threatening, risky or dangerous, without being prompted, he mentioned personality and its influence on susceptibility beliefs:

> I guess one thing stands out, but before I go there I'm going to have to give you a caveat. I have learned over the years that I have a very high-risk tolerance, and I didn't know that, Al. I didn't know it until I was in my fifties. I don't know how I managed not to know it, but I didn't, and, and I also, my wiring is such that I'm not a—I'm not a great worrier. I don't worry much and I can compartmentalize, people tell me, better than most people do. I'm an eternal optimist, but I combine that with I'm a planner. I—I try to see as far ahead as I can, and anticipate, and have a Plan A, B, and C; you know, that seems—that combination seems to allow me to sleep at night, even when things aren't the way I'd like them to be. So I think you're probably finding that, you know, senior executives come with all kinds of, personal, I use the term "wiring," but attributes, you know, some are pessimists; some are optimists; some are in the middle,

> some are natural worriers; some are not, etc., etc., so that given the same set of circumstances, we—we as individuals would probably react differently to that, and the equation of fear, or anxiety, or despair, whatever creeps into varying degrees, depending on the gatekeeper.

Similar to fear appeal theory (Witte, 1992), two factors must be considered when assessing whether a stimulus invokes fear-related emotions. The first is the severity of the threat from a given stimulus, which may be assessed by an individual objectively in terms of its intensity and duration. The second is the susceptibility of the individual to the threat from the stimulus which is a subjective measure based on personality differences. Figure 5.3, shows the conceptual relationship between severity or seriousness of a given threat and the susceptibility of the leader or the perception or belief that threat will affect the leader or her/his organization.

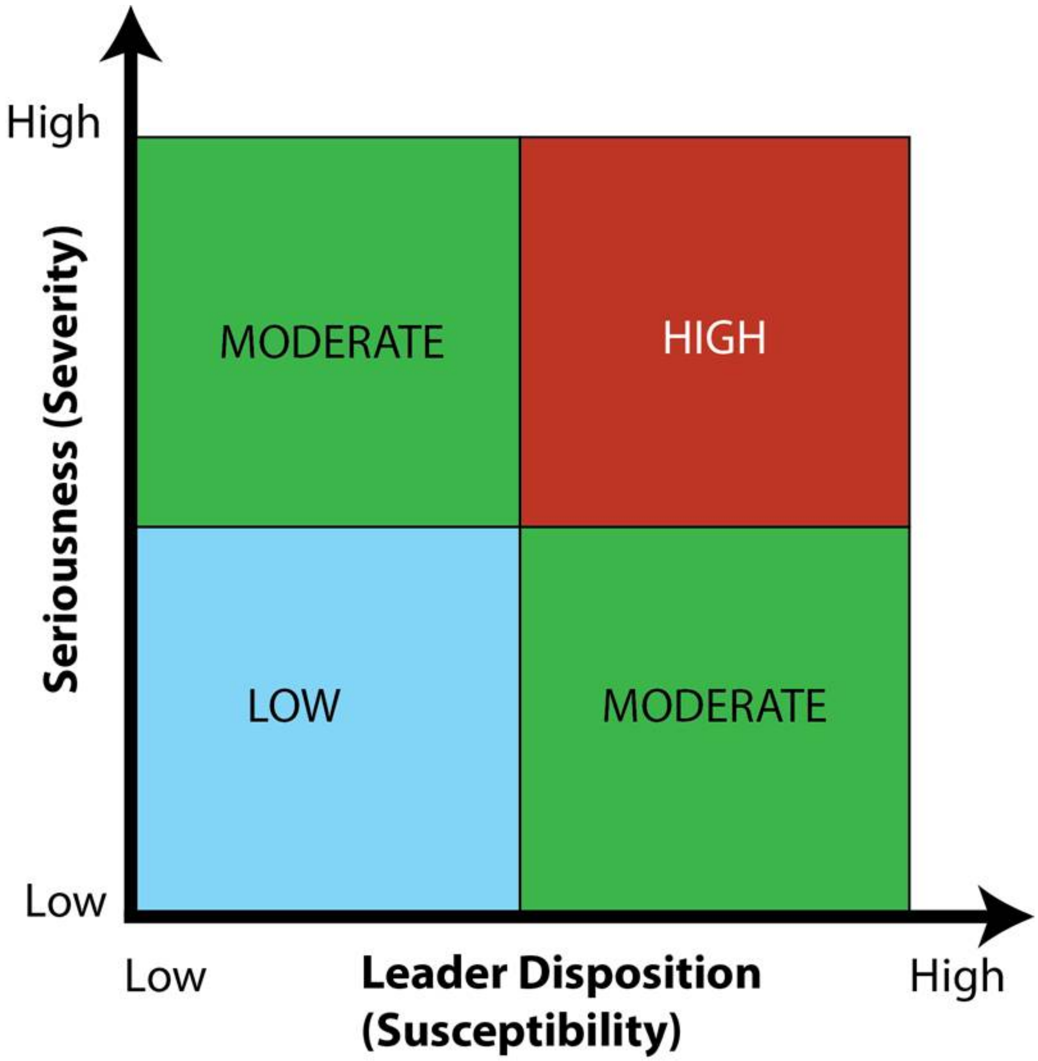

Figure 5.3. Assessment of threat/risk danger.

Figure 5.4 shows conceptual threat assessment levels. In the next section, I outline the most important differences in personality states to threat processing and how these differences influence leader's response.

Figure 5.4. Levels of threat/risk/danger.

Leader Self and Response Efficacy

Another theme that emerged from the data and from the literature is related to the level of confidence different participants felt about their ability to come up with and implement a solution to the threatening situation. Indeed consistent with fear-appeal research (Witte, 1992) and research on the relationship between leadership and leader efficacy (Hannah, Sweeney, & Lester, 2007), efficacy has emerged as a critical factor in how leaders evaluated threats in the external and internal environment. It is important to note that efficacy is dynamic and can increase or decrease over time. Here is an example that illustrates the dynamic nature of leader efficacy. One of the participants, Jeff, went through a leadership development program and he credited this program with raising his confidence level. When he first took on the CEO role, he was not sure that he knew how to do the job and deal with impending difficult challenges. In his own words he said, “The initial fear was that I didn’t know that I knew how to do this,” where ‘this’ refers to dealing with threats he perceived in restructuring the roles of the president and CEO. After the leadership development program, Jeff said, “there isn’t a lot I would say that—

that scares me anymore." When I asked him what has changed, he replied "It's all about the confidence and everything I've done in this last year." Bandura (1997) posits that there are several ways to improve self-efficacy. These include mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasions, and physiological reactions. For Jeff, it seemed what he learned from his experience combined with the confidence boost he got from the positive feedback he received from a feedback instrument (social persuasion) contributed to raising his efficacy beliefs.

In the leadership context and according to Hannah et al. (2007), leader efficacy is made up of a leader's action self-efficacy (i.e. leader's belief in his/her ability to take the actions needed to meet situational demands), leader self-regulation efficacy (leader's openness to aspects of the self which can result in greater self-awareness and self-knowledge that leads to more effective self-regulation) and leader means efficacy which refers to leaders' perceptions that they can draw upon others in their work environment such as peers, senior leaders and followers to support their leadership.

Given the understanding above of the types of threatening stimuli, threat severity, susceptibility to threats, as well as the role of efficacy in the experience of fear-related emotions, the types of emotional experiences to be studied is addressed next.

The Intensity and Duration of Experiences of Fear-Related Emotions

The intensity and duration of experiences of fear-related emotions correlated well with the severity of the threat, susceptibility to the threat and efficacy. Low severity and/or low susceptibility lead individuals to not experience fear-related emotions. At the same time, high severity and high susceptibility often leads to the experience of fear-related emotions. Both leader-efficacy and response efficacy modulate the type of experience where low efficacy leads to maladaptive fear-related emotions experiences and high efficacy leads to adaptive experiences. The point here is that when a leader who has strong self-efficacy and response efficacy beliefs experiences fear-related emotions they are able, at the same time, to deal with the threatening stimulus in adaptive ways. On the other hand, a leader with low self-efficacy would be dealing mostly with the emotional experience and is likely to have a maladaptive response to the threatening stimuli.

In the fourth chapter, the experience of two different leaders to a very similar threat was highlighted in Table 4.4. While the threat was very similar and both leaders were susceptible to the threat, the reactions of the two leaders were very different. One leader felt intense fear-related emotion and was consumed with dealing with his emotions. The other leader felt less intense fear-related emotions and focused more on dealing with the threat.

Types of Fears Experienced by the Participants

The participants reported a number of fear types, which were classified into 17 types. The fear of not being good enough or not knowing accounted for almost 19% of the fears reported. This relates to self-doubt or lack of confidence, the colloquial term for low self-efficacy. This correlates well to Bandura's (1997) conception of the role of self-efficacy in dealing with threatening life events. It has been said that people don't fear change; they fear loss (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Combining the reported fear of loss (ego, staff, company, control, material) with the fear of change yielded another 19% of the fears reported. Combining the reported and related fears of the unknown (uncertainty), fear of making tough decisions and fear of risk yielded another 19% of the reported fears. Existential fear or the fear of death accounted for almost 13% of the fears reported. The fear of not mattering or not being important, of public speaking, letting others down, of not being liked, of embarrassment and of abandonment all seem to relate to the fundamental fear of negative judgment (Reiss, 1991). These fears accounted for almost 23% of the fears reported.

The above leader fears are also generally consistent with results of a recent study on leaders' fears. Hampton (2013) shared twenty leader fears covering four different categories, which included: integrity (fear of inadequateness, underachievement, and vulnerability), credibility (minimal organizational support, rejections, presenting, losing status, and misperception), uncertainty (fear of unknowns, unfamiliarity, inexperience, and lacking information), and results (fear of failure, wrongs, bad outcomes, and minimal success).

It is also interesting to note the relationship between these fears and leadership in general and more specifically with Complex Adaptive Leadership. Change, uncertainty, the unknown, tough decisions and personal hungers were discussed by Heifetz and Linsky (2002) when they shared the perils and risks of adaptive leadership. It seems that both today's leadership context and the leadership process are fertile ground for these stimuli and thus these fears. It is not surprising that these types of fears were reported by the fifteen participants.

In the next few sections, the findings using answers to the research sub questions are presented starting with the influence of fear-related emotions on leaders' decisions.

What Is the Influence of Fear-Related Emotions on a Leader's Decisions?

The role emotions, including fear, play in human risk assessment and decision-making has been the subject of several studies (e.g., Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001; Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003; Lerner, Small, & Loewenstein, 2004). Generally speaking, research found that fear-related emotions triggered more pessimistic beliefs of risk (Lerner et al., 2003). While research on top executives has garnered some attention within the management field, there is scant research specific to the impact of fear-related emotion on executive leaders and decision making. This study intended to address some of this uncovered ground beginning with the choices leaders make when faced with threatening stimuli.

When faced with threatening stimuli, leaders made one of two fundamental choices. The first was situation or incident focused and the other was fear-related emotions focused. The situation or incident focused choice was about taking accountability for the circumstance or the situation and coming up with a response that is adaptive, relative to the desired outcomes, in spite of the emotions felt. The fear-related emotions response promotes a physically and/or emotionally protective or defensive response designed to help the leader deal more with his or her fear-related emotions. An example of this might be blaming others for what is happening, denying or ignoring the situation by minimizing the threat, or panicking altogether. This is essentially the fight, flight or freeze response. These findings are consistent with findings from the EPPM (Witte, 1992) and with research on the influence of fear on decision-making (Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001).

Factors influencing decisions. Several factors appeared to have a significant influence on which choice leaders made. These included leader efficacy as stated by the study participants in terms of self-confidence and confidence in the plan. Another factor was leader personality. This is consistent with research evidence supporting the role of executive experiences as a component of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and personality as factors affecting organizational outcomes (Hambrick, Finkelstein, & Monney, 2005).

How do leaders manage their fear-related emotions and what is the role of courage? management strategies? The participants shared a number of strategies that were helpful in their ability to manage and deal with fear-related emotions. Once fear-related emotions were invoked, leaders engaged in the following strategies:

Support from relationships. This includes support from family members, friends and formal and informal networks. One participant referred to this strategy as “lightening the load” or enlisting others in the situation to help carry some of the load so that the leader would not feel alone. In her research on female leaders’ fears, Cure (2009) also found that support and relationships were a mitigating factor in fear experiences.

The courage to be vulnerable. This strategy includes the leader’s ability to be open and honest with how he or she is feeling including the experience with fear-related emotions and honoring one’s feelings often times in a public way, when appropriate. This finding is consistent with work by Brown (2010) who highlights the courage to be vulnerable as a strength in the life of human beings.

Practicing mindfulness. This refers to the awareness and acceptance without judgment of the present moment. There are numerous studies supporting the positive effects of mindfulness. For example, the results of a meta–analytic review of the effects of mindfulness on anxiety and fear suggested that mindfulness-based therapy was an effective intervention for treating anxiety and mood problems (Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010).

Suppression. Some of the participants used a suppression strategy and hid or ignored their fear-related emotions. In the words of Merry, one of the research participants, here is what suppression sounds like, “I hate to say this, but you just kind of suck it up and do what you have to do.” It is important to note that in this instance, Merry was afraid for her life and engaged in a defensive behavior to protect her life.

Use fear-related emotions to inform. Some of the participants used their fear-related emotions to inform them of the need to take action and used these emotions as triggers or motives for adaptations. This is consistent with research that showed fear as both a motivator and inhibitor (e.g., Witte, 1998).

The role of courage. Pury, Kowalski, and Spearman (2007) distinguished between general courage and personal courage. In their views, general courage referred to actions that are monumentally courageous, taken with confidence and little or no fear, and viewed by society and others as courageous. Personal courage, on the other hand, referred to actions taken despite fear, struggle and personal limitations. These actions are seen as noble by people who know the individual or those who are empathetic to his or her view.

In this study, the focus is on leaders' general and personal courage using the distinction referenced above. As mentioned in the fourth chapter, 73% of the participants shared that courage played a significant role in how they managed their fear-related emotions. Most of the participants referred to personal courage when they indicated its relationship to fear. For example, Jay mentioned that "when courage is absolutely required is when we're having fear" and Jeff said that courage is "the flip side of fear." Reflecting on the reason that four of the participants did not mention courage, it seems that they were thinking of courage as monumentally courageous actions or perhaps they were very modest and humble about themselves.

Most of the participants commented that courage is useful to overcoming one's fears, getting over excuses and comforts, to facing unknowns and uncertainties and to taking risks or making risky decisions. They also related courage to being accountable, being vulnerable, being confident, or to self-efficacy. Taken all together, there is significant evidence pointing to the role of courage in leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions.

It seems based on the participants' responses that a courageous leader is one who might be experiencing fear-related emotions and yet musters the courage to overcome fear. Such a leader is accountable for the results they desire by making the choice to overcome the circumstances that might be in the way of the desired results. A courageous leader is one who is willing to be emotionally vulnerable.

There is a relationship between courage and efficacy. For example, Hannah et al. (2007) suggested that both self-efficacy and means efficacy are important factors to a courageous mindset. Furthermore, Fingeld (1999) established a link between courage and self-efficacy.

How Do Fear-Related Emotions Affect Leaders' Relationships With Followers?

Research participants engaged in several forms of emotional labor including surface acting, deep acting or genuine emotion. Emotional labor is a process people use to regulate and express their feelings (Hochschild, 1983). Additionally, leaders use emotional labor to influence followers during leader-follower interactions (Gardner et al., 2009).

The data showed that most leaders engaged in surface acting and kept their fear-related emotions to themselves and shared more positive emotions with followers, even though internally they felt fear-related emotions. This is consistent with other research findings. For example, Glasø and Einarsen (2008) showed that out of the 135 leaders they surveyed, (94.8%) faked and (97.9%) suppressed their negative emotions when interacting with followers.

A few of the participants displayed their genuine emotions. This happened because the participant did not experience fear-related emotions often or because the participant learned over time to be more comfortable with themselves. This leads into a discussion of the factors affecting leaders' abilities to display fear-related emotions.

Factors influencing leaders' ability to display fear-related emotions. The participants reported on several factors that influenced their ability to be genuine with their fear-related emotions during interactions with followers:

Strength of relationship. When the participants felt safe and trusted the recipients of their concerns and fear-related emotions, they were able to be themselves. In fact, relationships were one of the most beneficial elements that helped leaders deal with their fear-related emotions. Even when the participants were not able to share their fear-related emotions with all their followers, they were able to share these feelings with family members and/or trusted confidants.

Emotional intelligence. A number of the participants went through leadership development programs designed to improve their self-awareness and to enhance their emotional intelligence. These leaders reported that they were more comfortable in their own skin and therefore more able to share their genuine feelings. Other participants reported on the emotional maturity they gained through experience and how that helped them become more aware of their own emotions. Emotional vulnerability and empathy were two constructs that came up several times during the interviews. Both of these constructs are closely related to the emotional intelligence concept. This is consistent with scholarly research on emotional intelligence, which showed that the ability to manage emotions effectively is a key part of emotional intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Personality factors. According to the research data, several aspects of personality influenced participants' ability and willingness to share their fear-related emotions. These included personality traits such as optimism and extraversion, strength of personal confidence, or self-efficacy beliefs. The two personality traits and strong self-efficacy tended to enhance leaders' abilities to share genuine emotions. This is supported by prior research on the effects of leader traits on emotional expression (e.g., Rubin et al., 2005).

Impacts on leader-follower relationship. Leadership literature shows that the relationship between leaders and followers is extremely important to the leadership process. Leaders' emotional authenticity is very critical to establishing trust between leaders and followers. While followers were not interviewed for this study, the participants recognized that followers were often able to read their true feelings from facial and body expressions. According to the participating leaders in this study, when the trust between leaders and followers was strong, followers often showed empathy and concern toward their leaders when they sensed that they were experiencing fear-related emotions. The data also showed that leaders' emotional vulnerability was important to building trust between leaders and followers and therefore a key factor in building strong relationships. This is consistent with findings from Bunker (1997).

The experience of fear-related emotions is also critical to leaders' health and well-being. This aspect of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions is discussed next.

How Do Fear-Related Emotions Impact Leaders' Health and Well-Being?

Health and well-being could be affected by a number of factors such as organizational settings, personal traits and occupational stress (Danna & Griffin, 1999). Data from this study were collected using self-reports from the participant's responses to the question: What was the effect of the fear or fear-related emotions on your health and well-being? This includes physical, mental and emotional well-being. The data and results shared here are based on participants' subjective assessment of their health and well-being specific to the influence of fear-related emotions.

The reported health and well-being impacts were classified into three categories: serious health impacts, mild health impacts, and little or no impact. The majority of the participants (67%) experienced mild health and well-being impacts. These included headaches, migraines, loss of sleep, stomach nerves, and being distracted or pre-occupied with the stimuli. About 20% of the participants experienced serious health and well-being impacts. These included eosinophilia-myalgia syndrome (EMS), pulmonary fibrosis disease, heart attack and the threat of heart attack. About 13% of the participants experienced minor or no health and well-being impacts.

The no impact participants mentioned that they had been through emotional intelligence training and were very open about their emotional experiences at work and at home. The only impact mentioned by these participants was being too busy to maintain physical exercise and fitness activities.

Managing leaders' health and well-being. Data were collected from the participants to better understand the strategies they used to manage their health and well-being.

Relaxation techniques. These included meditation, support from family and friends, physical exercise or activities, yoga, massage, acupuncture and getting away on vacation including camping and other events.

Understanding and addressing the underlying issues. This pertains to re-appraising or re-examining the situation that is causing the fear-related emotion and starting to adaptively address the issues. This entails taking accountability instead of avoiding the issues.

Thinking about and remembering the higher purpose. Data showed that some leaders kept reminding themselves of why they were in this role. Remembering the higher purpose one has and how that aligns with their role was an important part of managing health and well-being. This is consistent with literature on job motivation (Pink, 2009).

Changing unhealthy habits. Unhealthy habits such as lack of physical fitness, unhealthy eating habits, and not finding time for meditation and other relaxation techniques were reported to creep up when participants were under high stress. Leaders reported that when under high stress they needed more healthy habits.

Faith and spirituality. A few of the research participants drew on their faith to cope with the uncertainties and unknowns of leadership and thus fear-related emotions.

Reflections and Summary: Toward a Model of Leader Experience With Fear-Related Emotions

The answers to the central research question and the four sub-questions began to illuminate how organizational leaders experience fear-related emotions. This included threats that cause fear-related emotions and the characteristics of leaders' emotional response. The participants reported many critical incidents highlighting the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) within the leadership context that leaders have to navigate in today's organizations. These everyday incidents were generated by the external and internal environments and also from within the leaders.

Specifically, executive leaders were concerned about events related to the external environment (the economy and/or markets, regulatory or legal events, political incidents) and the internal environment (organization-wide issues, employee-related issues, and leader-related incidents). Stimuli of fear-related emotions can be the result of a complex interactive dynamic between the internal and external context and individual leaders.

The perception of threat from a given stimulus is influenced by perceived threat severity and perceived susceptibility by the leader. Severity and susceptibility then become two important factors that modulate leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. Threat severity from a given stimulus is a function of threat intensity and duration. Intensity of the threat varies from low to severe and duration from short to long. Leader susceptibility to a given stimulus is modulated by leader personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness and core self traits such self-esteem, locus of control and emotional stability. Some of these aspects of leader personality traits were mentioned by participants as important factors for susceptibility. If the perception of a threat is low as a result of low severity or low susceptibility, then the leader will not experience fear-related emotions because they perceive the threat as not relevant.

Once the perception of a threat from a given stimulus is high enough (severity and susceptibility are high enough), leader-efficacy determined the choice between two responses. One was adaptive where the leader dealt with the threat in spite of experiencing fear-related emotions. The other was maladaptive where the leader dealt mainly with managing fear-related emotions. Leader efficacy includes both self-efficacy and response efficacy components. Specifically, leader efficacy is made up of leader action self-efficacy (i.e., leader's beliefs in his/her ability to take the actions needed to meet situational demands), leader self-regulation efficacy (leader's openness to aspects of the self which can result in greater self-awareness and self-knowledge that lead to more effective self-regulation), and leader means efficacy which refers to leaders' perceptions that they can draw upon others in their work environment such as peers, senior leaders and followers to support their leadership (Hannah et al., 2007). The low end of the threat spectrum (low intensity and short duration) is less likely to act as fear-related emotions stimulus and therefore would not lead to leader actions relative to the threat.

The above interpretation of the research data and analysis are built upon and supported by theoretical foundations from the Fear-Appeal Theory (EPPM) (Witte, 1992) and affective events theory (AET) (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). EPPM is a model that attempts to predict how individuals will react when confronted with fear inducing stimuli from threatening communication (fear-appeal). The AET postulates that daily hassles and uplifts or affective events from within the organization lead to positive and negative affective responses. AET is about how the work environment emotionally affects employees and does not take into account any outside influences. In this study, the EPPM and AET were extended to include events or threats from the external and external environments, psychological threats from within the leader, and considered the dynamic interaction between all three sources.

As we saw in the leader's responses, a leader's decisions can be influenced by fear-related emotions. As stated earlier, when faced with threatening stimulus, leaders make an initial appraisal about the threat; whether it's severe enough and whether they are susceptible to it. If the answer is no to both of these, then fear-related emotions are not experienced and therefore have no impact on leader's decisions. If the threat is severe enough and the leader is susceptible to it, the leader then makes a second judgment on whether he tends to his fear-related emotions or to the threat and what he or she can do about it. The results of this study indicate that leaders are not always in a defensive posture as originally thought. Leader-efficacy modulated leader response and decisions. Several participants commented on the functional usefulness of fear-related emotions and how it alerted them to take action to address and deal adaptively with a given threatening situation.

Most leaders in this study suppressed their actual fear-related emotions and used either surface acting or deep acting to show different and more positive emotions when interacting with followers. This is consistent with popular culture's display of roles, which often paint leaders as fearless and was further enforced by the leaders' self-image. This often came at the expense of authenticity when followers were able to recognize the inner feelings of leaders from their facial and/or body expressions and figured out that the expressed emotions were inconsistent with the felt ones.

Emotional suppression had a negative impact on leaders' health and well-being. It seemed that leaders who practiced suppression the most suffered from serious health consequences and ones who were able to express their genuine emotions suffered the least health and well-being consequences. This is consistent with other research literature. For example, Gross and Levenson (1997) point out that suppression of emotions has negative effects including increased sympathetic activation of the cardiovascular system.

Leaders in this study used several strategies to manage their wellbeing, such as relaxation techniques, healthy life habits, reappraisal and other cognitive strategies, and their beliefs in their own purpose or spiritual beliefs.

Model for Leaders' Experiences With Fear-Related Emotions

In Figure 5.5, a Model for Leaders' Experience with Fear-related Emotions is advanced based on the data gleaned from the interviews, data interpretation, and pertinent theory. The model is predicated on organizational leaders' perception of threats, risks or danger from a stimulus in the external organizational environment or the internal organizational environment. The first assessment of the stimulus by the leader is about the severity of the threat, risk or danger and the susceptibility of the leader to the threat, risk or danger. If the result of the first assessment indicates the threat is not severe enough or the leader is not susceptible to it, the leader will not experience fear-related emotions. On the other hand, if the perception of threat is severe enough and the leader is susceptible to it, fear-related emotions are invoked. From there, the model proposes that the leader makes a subsequent assessment and may respond in two fundamentally different ways. The first is adaptive. The leader takes adaptive action to address the situation or threat. The second is maladaptive where the leader focuses almost exclusively on the fear-related emotions and neglects to respond to the situation or threat.

As indicated in Figure 5.5, the factors influencing the first assessment are: (a) the perceived severity or seriousness of the threat, risk or danger, and (b) the perception of susceptibility or likelihood of impact to the leader or the organization from it. The severity is related to the perceived intensity and duration of the threat, risk or danger stimulus. The susceptibility is related to leader personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness and core self-evaluation traits (Hannah et al., 2007).

The factors influencing the second assessment are related to leader and leadership efficacy. Specifically, these are leader action self-efficacy, leader regulation efficacy, and leader means efficacy. In summary, leader and leadership efficacy are related to the leader's belief in their leadership ability and belief in the leadership strategy they devise.

The model is shown in a circular fashion to represent the dynamic nature of the contexts and the responses. As such, it is presumed that time is an important part of the model and is not constant. A leader may be subjected to multiple stimuli and in a dynamic non-linear fashion where the luxury of assessing one stimulus at a time cannot be afforded to him or her. It should also be noted that the emotional experience itself is dynamic. A leader is unlikely to stay in the same emotional state and the intensity of the experience may subside or increase depending on changes to the factors discussed above, which in themselves are also dynamic and not constant.

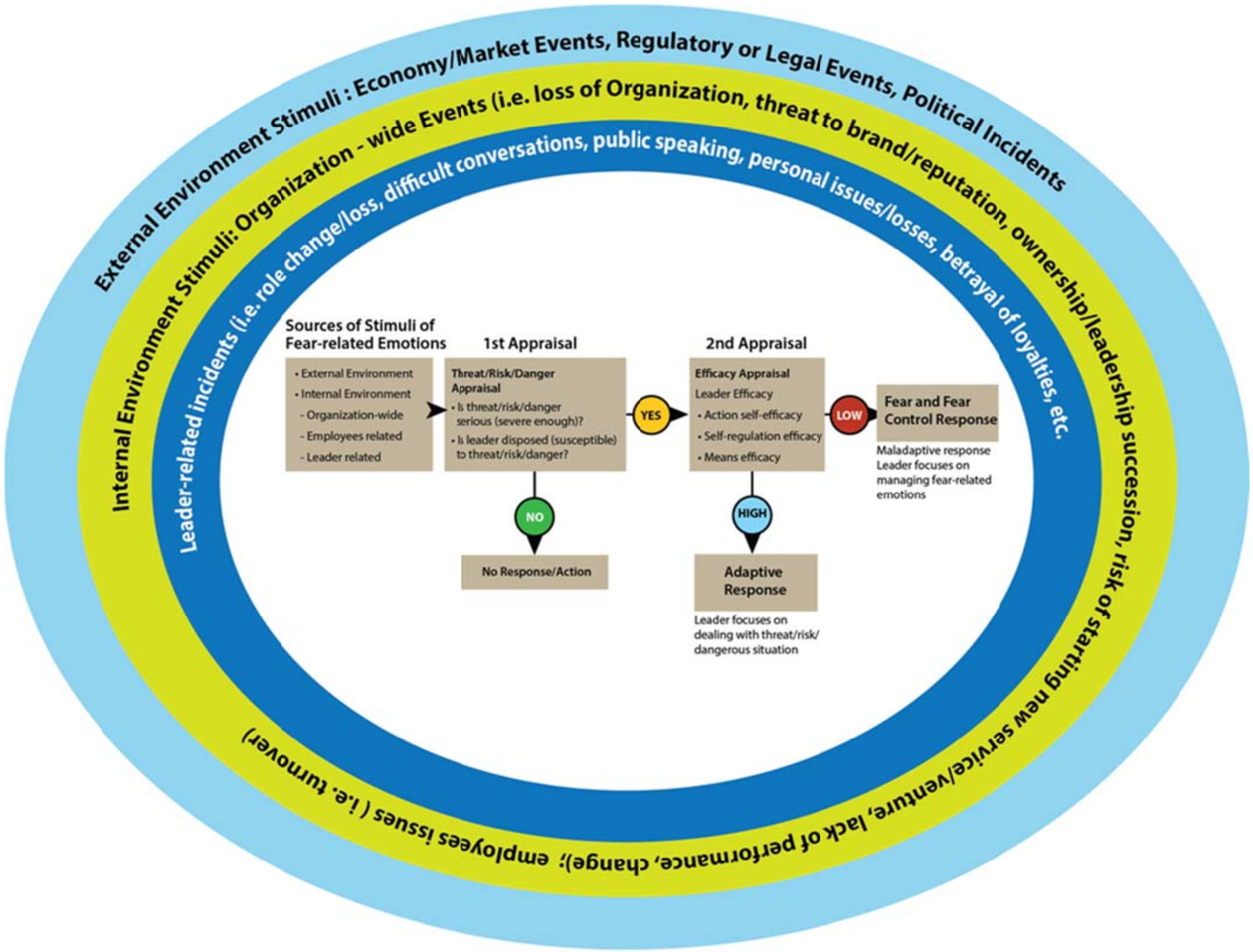

Figure 5.5. Conceptual model: Leader experiences with fear-related emotions.

Limitations of This Research

The study of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions was modest in both scale and scope. I used a qualitative phenomenological approach to better understand executive leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. As such, there are several limitations to this study including the inability to generalize the results to all executive leaders or to all leaders in general. In addition to methodological limitations, a few other limitations are important to understand:

Study sample. The participants of the study consisted of 15 executive leaders with a majority from the consulting engineering industry. This was a sample of convenience that was influenced by time and geographic constraints. All participants except for one European executive were from the United States of America. The sample was also mainly made up of men (12 males and 3 females). I did not perceive noticeable differences between male and female participants' stories based on gender; therefore the influence of gender was not specifically highlighted in this study. All fifteen participants were white and made it impossible to assess the contributions of race to the study. Additionally, the participants' ages ranged from 56 to 77 years, which indicates participants who are relatively older with more life experience. Experience is one of the factors related to efficacy and a factor in leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. Another aspect of the sample is that five of the participants have retired from their executive leadership role. It was hoped that retired executives would be less likely to engage in perception management.

Research topic. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, there were inherent challenges for both the participants and the researcher. The researcher had a working relationship with seven of the participants, which was helpful to establish trust between researcher and participants. The researcher used rapport building and self-disclosure to build trust with the other participants. While it seemed that all the participants were open about their experiences with fear-related emotions, it is hard to know for certain if the participants fully represented their true experiences or engaged in some impression management. One of the potential participants expressed apprehension about the interview and decided not to participate. This experience highlights the importance of the topic sensitivity.

The nature of emotions. As mentioned earlier, there is a wide divergence in the field of psychology on what constitutes emotions. One aspect of this difference is dimensional versus discrete emotional perspectives. A group of psychologists (e.g., Barrett, 2006; Russell, 1994) argue for characterizing emotions and thus emotional experiences in terms of dimensions such as valence (pleasantness or hedonic value) and arousal (bodily activation). Others (e.g., Darwin, 2002; Ekman, 1992; Lazarus, 1991) argue for discrete emotions such as fear, joy, sadness, anger, etc. This study utilized the discrete dimension and focused solely on fear-related emotions even when other emotions were surfaced. Robinson and Clore (2002a, 2002b) suggested that self-reports of emotions are likely to be more valid with the general nature of the dimensional perspective. This study uses the critical incident technique and is designed to help participants recall specific emotional situations and hence avoid this potential challenge. The participants for the most part appeared to remember their experiences with a great level of detail.

Additionally, this study addressed only conscious and subjective emotions. LeDoux (2015) suggests that there are unconscious threat responses from the brain survival circuits that may result in fear-related emotions. These unconscious responses were not the subject of this study since it relied mainly on self-reports of conscious feelings and emotional experiences.

The role of culture. Culture at the organizational or group levels is likely to have significant influence on how leaders experience and express emotions. With the limited focus of this study, culture was beyond the scope and was only subjectively referred to in terms of emotional display roles.

Implications of Research to Leadership and Change

Based on the data gathered and analyzed, themes deduced and research questions answered, the following is an examination of how the research findings impact theory, practice, and future research.

Implications for leadership theory. As a practitioner and student of leadership, I often found myself disillusioned with how leaders and leadership were portrayed. Sinclair (2007) wisely articulated this as “encounters with leader and leadership: with idealized heroic performance, impoverished theories and oversimplified templates” (p. 13). Some leadership literature and theories implicitly or explicitly suggest that leaders are super human or heroic figures who can be called upon for transformational, visionary, charismatic or transactional leadership. This view and approach to leadership has been unsuccessful, especially when organizations, communities or societies are facing complex adaptive challenges. These are challenges that often have ill-defined problems and their solutions are yet to be discovered or established. At the same time, the people or followers facing these challenges become anxious and apprehensive about the future and look to the ‘hero leader’ for the fix (Sinclair, 2007).

A relatively new and different conceptualization of leadership suggests that tackling complex adaptive challenges requires formal leaders and followers or stakeholders who are facing the adaptive challenge to both practice adaptive leadership (e.g., Heifetz, 1994; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). In that sense, everyone is a leader and the difference is whether a given leader has formal authority or not (Heifetz, 1994).

This study has shown that followers often avoid practicing the needed adaptive leadership and look to authority figures to lead them out of complex and adaptive challenges because most are often preoccupied with the management of their fear-related emotions rather than taking responsibility for adaptive challenges. Both followers (informal leaders) and formal leaders collide in the work avoidance and reasons might be fear-related emotions. Formal leaders are afraid to admit that they do not know enough. However, not knowing enough is the norm when facing adaptive challenges. Formal leaders may fear a loss of power and control when the work needs to be shared with everyone and power is less centralized. Followers may be afraid of the unknown, of failure, and of losing the status quo they become familiar with.

This study further emphasized the role of leader and leadership efficacy given the nature and types of challenges in today's context. This is consistent with findings (Hannah et al., 2007) where efficacy emerged as a critical factor in how leaders evaluated threats in the external and internal environment. For leadership to honor the roles played by the context and the emotional aspects of leadership, theory should further incorporate leaders' and followers' efficacy beliefs as a critical factor to mobilizing both formal leaders and followers to address these challenges. These challenges act as stimuli of fear-related emotions and therefore challenge both leaders' and followers' efficacy (collective efficacy). When learning and experimentation is needed, organizations, communities and society are often clinging to familiar ways and knowledge. This study shows that this can be a protective choice people make against the unpleasant feelings of fear-related emotions.

Northouse (2010) documented different leader-centered approaches to leadership such as trait, skills, style and situational approaches. All of these approaches can benefit from the results of this study. For example, this research validated that leader traits play a role in the disposition leaders have to threats. Some leaders are more vigilant and therefore more susceptible to threats than others. Additionally, the skills approach which emphasizes that leader skills and abilities can be developed is consistent with the focus of this research on leader efficacy.

This study extended the EPPM (Witte, 1992) and AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) to leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. While the EPPM focused on threats from messages or appeals and the AET focused on threats from within the organization in terms of affective events, this study expanded the threat sources to the external and the internal environment. This study also acknowledged the dynamic nature of the context and emotional responses.

This research also supports other research (e.g., Lerner & Keltner, 2000, 2001; Lerner et al., 2003; Lerner et al., 2004) that investigates the impact of emotions such as fear-related emotions on leaders' decisions. This highlights the role emotions play in organizational leadership since one of the key roles of leaders is decision-making.

While there are ample research studies on the role of leaders' emotions in the follower-leader relationship, there are scant research studies highlighting the influence of fear-related emotions on the leader-follower relationship. This study addressed this need. An interesting finding of the study is that leaders perceived when a leader had established a trusting relationship with followers, followers overlooked the lack of leader emotional authenticity when it came to expression of fear-related emotions.

Additional contributions of the study to leadership theory are an understanding of the impacts of fear-related emotions on the health and well-being of leaders. While the impacts of stress on leaders have been studied in the past, there were no direct studies on the effects of fear-related emotions on leaders' health and well-being. This is important for the study of leadership as we need healthy and vibrant leaders given today's challenges and opportunities.

Implications for the practice of leadership. Given the focus of this study on leadership practice, it has made significant contribution to the understanding of an often neglected aspect of leadership practice. As mentioned earlier, some of the leaders who participated in this study commented on the lack of leadership literature on this subject. Furthermore, this study points to the need for:

Leader efficacy development. The importance of leader efficacy has been discussed by other researchers (e.g., Hannah et al., 2007). This study points out that strong leader efficacy beliefs are especially crucial in times of turbulent environments when the threats, risks or dangers are high.

Stress management training. With the experience of fear-related emotions, often times the stress level of leaders is very high. Learning how to manage stress becomes very critical to the health and well-being of leaders. Techniques such as mindfulness can be taught and will help leaders manage their stress.

Emotional intelligence development. Participants in this study who had formal training and development that enhanced their self-awareness seemed to have benefited greatly from these programs. In addition to self-awareness, leaders can learn how threats can result in the experience of fear-related emotion and what the contributing factors to this experience are. This awareness will help raise their consciousness of their own emotional experiences and could lead them to be more effective in their practice.

Strong and trust-based relationships. This study has further emphasized the role that social support plays in leaders' needs, especially when experiencing fear-related emotions. Building trust-based relationships both within and outside the organization is critical to the management of fear-related emotions.

In addition to the above issues, this study has contributed to how leaders can become aware of their fear-related emotions and to strategies leaders can use to manage these emotions in a healthy way.

This study also furthers our understanding of the role fear-related emotions play in every day leadership or management. For example, managers rely on their ability to give and receive ongoing feedback to and from employees as a crucial aspect of performance improvement. Fear-related emotions often get in the way of feedback. Jackman and Strober (2003) mentioned that "fears and assumptions about feedback manifest themselves in psychologically maladaptive behaviors such as procrastination, denial, brooding, jealousy, and self-sabotage" (p. 3). This study shows how leaders and managers can improve their efficacy and thus overcome fear maladaptive behaviors.

Implications for future research. This study examined executive leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions using the critical incident technique. It relied on leaders self-reports of subjective and conscious experience with fear-related emotions. This approach had some inherent weaknesses such as reliance on leaders' memory, introduced biases, and impression management. While these weaknesses did not seem to impair this study or represent significant challenges to the ability of the research to address the question about leaders' emotional experiences, other methods might be used in future research to avoid these weaknesses. Furthermore, another study could also incorporate the voices of the followers and therefore assess congruence with the executive leaders' stories.

Expanding on the idea of including other stakeholders within the organization, a study could be designed to understand the experience with fear-related emotions from the perspective of the whole organization where leaders, followers, and other stakeholders are included. This expansion might include different types of organizations in terms of size and industry.

Findings from this study could be used to conduct a mixed design study where a fear-related emotions scale is created and used in conjunction with a leader efficacy scale, followed by interviews. This would help better understand and generalize the relationship between fear-related emotions, types of fears, and leader efficacy.

Conclusions

Based on this study of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions, a number of important conclusions can be made:

1. Organizational leaders perceive that many stimuli can be the source of threats, risks or dangers. In this study, the internal environment accounts for most (70%) of these threats. This may imply that executive leaders primarily look within their organizations for these stimuli. These stimuli resulted in the fears of not knowing enough (self-doubt), fear of loss, and fear of the unknown or uncertainty among other fears. These fears (self-doubt or lack of confidence, uncertainty and loss) are at the heart of the practice of leadership and therefore highlight the importance of this research to the study and practice of leadership and change.

2. Leader efficacy (leader action self-efficacy, leader self-regulation efficacy and leader means efficacy) and leader personality traits modulate the experience of fear-related emotions. The strength of leader efficacy beliefs and positive leader traits lead to a more adaptive response to threatening stimuli. Efficacy was also related to courage.
3. Fear is not always viewed as negative by the participants. Sometimes fear motivates leaders to take action and deal with the situation including self-improvement and development.
4. Leaders make adaptive decisions in the presence of threatening stimuli when their efficacy beliefs are strong. Leaders make maladaptive decisions when the strength of their efficacy beliefs is weak. This emphasizes the importance of leadership development and building self-efficacy and response efficacy beliefs. This can be accomplished through training, coaching on the job, and positive reinforcement from successes.
5. Leaders are important to our ability to make progress on the adaptive challenges that we constantly face. Therefore the health and well-being of leaders is important to our organizations. Leaders suffer from serious to mild health impacts as a result of these threatening stimuli and their experience with fear-related emotions. Leaders need to be supported and need to learn how to exercise self-care so that they can stay vibrant and healthy.

Leaders' experience with fear-related emotions was an obvious gap in leadership studies. It is my wish that this study serves to fill this gap in some way. I am very grateful to the fifteen executive leaders who engaged with me in this conversation about a very sensitive topic. It is my hope this study will serve other leaders and help them realize that experiencing fear-related emotions is part of being human.

Appendix

Appendix A

Pilot Test for Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Hello, (name). Before we begin, I want to say thank you for being part of my pilot test and for talking with me today about your personal experience.

1. The aim of my research is to better describe and understand leaders' experiences with fear and fear-related emotions such as worry, anxiety, or apprehension. I want to better understand these experiences to help leaders recognize the nature of fear-related emotions and to help leaders find the courage to better deal with the complex and unpredictable situations that are inherent in leading today. As the CEO of mid-sized company, I often deal with internal and external threats. As such, I have personally experienced fear-related emotions. In order to accomplish my research goal, I am asking a few leaders to share their own experiences with me.

2. These interviews are strictly for a pilot study. I will use this opportunity to get feedback on the interview questions and the interview experience in general. My focus is solely on method. Therefore, the content that you share with me today will be strictly confidential and will not be published. To that end, I will be asking for your feedback on the interview experience and questions at a later date. I will then use your feedback to improve my interview protocol before I conduct the actual interviews.

3. I want to especially acknowledge your courage and willingness to talk with me today about your leadership experiences with fear.

4. First, can you share with me, in as much detail as possible, an incident or situation in the context of your leadership work where you experienced fear or fear-related emotions?

    a. What was the nature of the threat or risk which generated these emotions?
    b. What were you afraid of, worried or anxious about?
    c. Did you spend most of your time managing your emotions or dealing with the threat or situation? Why?
    d. What was the relationship between the threat(s) and your experience of fear-related emotions?

5. What decision(s) did you make to deal with or address the threat? How did fear-related emotions influence your decision(s)?

6. To what extent did your emotional experience show up in your relationships with followers? What did you do to manage your emotional experience in the relationship context?

7. What was the effect of the fear or fear-related emotions on your health and well-being? This includes physical, mental and emotional.

8. What role did courage play in how you managed the situation and your own emotions?

Appendix B

Letters of Introduction to Subjects (via email)

Hi _______,

I am writing to follow up on John Doe’s request to you regarding participation in my Ph.D. study. I understand you indicated to him that you would be willing to be a participant in my study of leaders' experiences with fear-related emotions. Thanks so much.

If you are still willing to do this, I would like to schedule an appointment with you for an interview. Could you please let me know when you would be available for about an hour? I'm available ____________________________. The interview takes about an hour.

I have also attached a consent form for your review and signature. It is required by the school.

I am looking forward to meeting you and to talking with you. I heard great things from John Doe about you.

Best regards,

Al

Appendix C

Consent Form

Project Title: Organizational Leaders' Experience with Fear-related Emotions and Courage.

Project Investigator: Al Barkouli

Dissertation Chair: Al Guskin

1. I understand that this study is of a research nature. It may offer no direct benefit to me.

2. Participation in this study is voluntary. I may refuse to enter it or may withdraw at any time without creating any harmful consequences to myself.

3. The purpose of this study is to better understand leaders' experience with fear-related emotions and courage. The research will specifically focus on the influence of fear-related emotions on leaders' relationship with followers, leaders' decision making and health and well-being. In addition, the study will investigate the relationship between fear-related emotions and courage.

4. As a participant in the study, I will be asked to take part in the following procedures: one-time semi-structured interview or conversation with the investigator. This conversation will last about 60 minutes or less and will focus on past experience with fear-related emotions and courage.

   Participating in the study will take no more than 60 minutes of my time and will take place in a face-to-face, telephone call or Skype meeting.

5. The risks, discomforts and inconveniences of the above study might be: This study will be limited to the interview and therefore the likelihood of risks is negligible. Given the emotional nature of the study, there may be some emotional discomfort that results from the recollection of an incident which evoked fear-related emotions.

6. The possible benefits of the study might be:

    a. Direct benefit to me: there might be therapeutic benefits from being able to discuss an emotionally difficult situation in a safe context. Also there might be positive feeling generated from recalling incidents of courage and courageous actions.

    b. Benefits to others: Help leaders' better understand their experience with fear-related emotions and courage. Given the high rewards and risks of leading, this might enable others to take on more leadership and overcome the fear of leadership risks.

7. Information about the study was discussed with me by Al Barkouli. If I have further questions, I can call him/her at XXX-XXX-XXXX.

8. Though the purpose of this study is primarily to fulfill the investigator's requirement to complete a formal research project as part of a dissertation at Antioch University. The investigator also intends to include the data and results of the study in future scholarly publications and presentations. Our confidentiality agreement, as articulated above, will be effective in all cases of data sharing.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Al Barkouli, at telephone # (XXX-XXX-XXXX) or via email at abarkouli@antioch.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Philomena Essed, Chair of the Institution Review Board (IRB), PhD. In Leadership & Change at Antioch University at email essed@antioch.edu.

I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to taking part in this study.

Date:___________________________ Signed:______________________________

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Hello, (name). Before we begin, I want to say thank you for being part of my PhD study and for talking with me today about your personal experience.

1. The aim of my research is to better describe and understand leaders' experiences with fear and fear-related emotions such as worry, anxiety, apprehension, etc. I want to better understand these experiences to help leaders recognize the nature of fear-related emotions and to help leaders find better and positive ways to deal with complex and unpredictable situations that are inherent in leading today. As the CEO of a mid-sized company, I often deal with internal and external threats. As such, I have personally experienced fear-related emotions. In order to accomplish my research goal, I am asking a few leaders to share their own experiences with me.

2. I want to especially acknowledge your willingness to talk with me today about your leadership experiences with fear-related emotions. I know culture can make it hard for leaders to talk about their emotions especially fear-related emotions.

3. Just to make sure you know, your real name and the name of your company will not be shared.

4. Are you ready to begin our interview?

5. I want to first collect brief background information, if that is okay with you?

    a. Could you please describe your past or current Executive Leadership role? How long have you or did you serve in this role? Tell me a little about your organization? Size, industry?

6. Let us now get into the meat of your interview. First, can you think of an incident or situation in the context of your leadership work where you felt the situation as threatening, risky or dangerous?

    a. Could you please share the incident or situation details with me?
    b. How did you feel? Did this situation generate any fears or fear-related emotions or other emotions within you? Why or why not?
    c. If yes, what were you afraid of, worried or anxious about? Only if needed as follow up—what would you say was the nature of your fears?
    d. How did you deal with the situation? Only as follow up—did you spend most of your time managing your emotions or dealing with the threat or situation? Why?
    e. What was most helpful to you in dealing with this or addressing the emotional part of the situation?

7. What decision(s) did you make to address this situation, deal with or address the threat, risk or danger? How did emotions or your fears influence your decision(s)?

8. To what extent did your emotional experience show up in your relationships with followers and others? Only as follow up—what did you do to manage your emotional experience in the relationship context? Did you share your emotions, hide them, or suppress them?

9. What was the effect of these emotions or emotions that were generated in this situation on your health and well-being? Only as follow up—this includes physical, mental and emotional. How did you manage to address the health aspects of this situation?

10. Thinking back to this specific situation or in general, how did you or do you manage and deal with your fear emotions? Follow up only—what role did courage play in how you managed this situation and/or other threatening/risky situations? Does courage help with management of your own emotions? Do you see yourself as a courageous person?

11. Thinking back to the topic and interview questions, is there anything else that you would like to share with me about this topic?

12. Demographic information: lastly can you share a couple of things with me?

    a. What best describes your racial background: white, black, Hispanic, other?
    b. What is your age and gender?

References

Abraham, R. (1998). Emotional dissonance in organizations: A conceptualization of consequences, mediators, and moderators. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *19*(3), 137–146. doi: 10.1108/01437739810210185

Ackerman, R. H., & Maslin-Ostrowski, P. (2004). The wounded leader and emotional learning in the schoolhouse. *School Leadership & Management*, *24*(3), 311–328. doi: 10.1080/1363243042000266945

Almeida, D. M., Wethington, E., & Kessler, R. C. (2002). The daily inventory of stressful events an interview-based approach for measuring daily stressors. *Assessment*, *9*(1), 41–55. doi: 10.1177/1073191102091006

Alvesson, M. (1996). Leadership studies: From procedure and abstraction to reflexivity and situation. *The Leadership Quarterly, 7*, 455– 485. doi: 10.1016/s1048-9843(96)90002-8

Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003). Managers doing leadership: The extra-ordinarization of the mundane. *Human Relations, 56*(12), 1435–1459. doi: 10.1177/00187267035612001

Ashforth, B. E., & Humphrey, R. H. (1995). Emotion in the workplace: A reappraisal. *Human Relations*, *48*(2), 97–125. doi: 10.1177/001872679504800201

Ashkanasy, N. M. (2003). Emotions in organizations: A multilevel perspective. *Research in Multi-Level Issues, 2,* 9–54. doi:10.1016/s1475-9144(03)02002-2

Ashkanasy, N. M., Härtel, C. E., & Zerbe, W. J. (Eds.). (2000). *Emotions in the workplace: Research, theory, and practice*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Ashkanasy, N. M., & Humphrey, R. H. (2011). Current emotion research in organization behavior. *Emotion Review*, *3*, 214–224. doi: 10.1177/1754073910391684

Ashkanasy, N. M., & Rush, S. (2004, September/October). Face to face: Emotional rescue: A conversation with Neal Ashkanasy. *Leadership in Action*, *24*(4), 15–18. doi: 10.1002/lia.1078

Ashton-James, C. E., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2005). What lies beneath? A process analysis of affective events theory. *Emerald Journal*. *1*, 23–46. doi: 10.1016/S1746-9791(05)01102-8

Ashton-James, C. E., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2008). Affective events theory: A strategic perspective. *Research on emotion in organizations*, *4*, 1–34. doi:10.1016/s1746-9791(08)04001-7

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundation of thought and action*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: Freeman.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 1–26. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.1

Bandura, A., & Locke, E. A. (2003). Negative self-efficacy and goal effects revisited. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*(1), 87–99. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.88.1.87

Barnard, J. W. (2008). Narcissism, over-optimism, fear, anger, and depression: The interior lives of corporate leaders. *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, William & Mary Law School Research Paper No. 08-10. Retrieved from http://ssrn.com/abstract=1136888

Barrett, L. F. (2006). Are emotions natural kinds? *Perspectives on psychological science*, *1*(1), 28–58. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-6916.2006.00003.x

Beck, U. (2009). *World at risk*. Malden, MA: Polity.

Bell, C., & Song, F. (2005). Emotions in the conflict process: An application of the cognitive appraisal model of emotions to conflict management. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 16*(1), 30–54. doi:10.1108/eb022922

Bitner, M. J., Booms, B. H., & Tetreault, M. S. (1990). The service encounter: Diagnosing favorable and unfavorable incidents. *Journal of Marketing, 51*, 71–84. doi: 10.2307/1252174

Bono, J. E., & Ilies, R. (2006). Charisma, positive emotions and mood contagion. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *17*(4), 317–334. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.04.008

Bono, J. E., & Vey, M. A. (2005). Toward understanding emotional management at work: A quantitative review of emotional labor research. *Emotions in organizational behavior*, 213–233.

Borgen, W. A., & Amundson, N. E. (1984). *The experience of unemployment: Implications for counseling the unemployed*. Scarborough, Canada: Nelson Canada.

Borkovec, T. D. (1994). The nature, functions, and origin of worry. In G. Davey & F. Tallis (Eds.), *Worrying: Perspective on theory, assessment and treatment* (pp. 5–33). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Borkovec, T. D., & Inz, J. (1990). The nature of worry in generalized anxiety disorder: A predominance of thought activity. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, *28*(2), 153–158. doi: 10.1016/0005-7967(90)90027-g

Bowman, E. H. (1986). Concerns of the CEO. *Human Resource Management*, *25*(2), 267-285.

Brotheridge, C. M., & Grandey, A. A. (2002). Emotional labor and burnout: Comparing two perspectives of "people work." *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *60*(1), 17–39. doi:10.1006/jvbe.2001.1815

Brown, B. (2010, June). *The power of vulnerability* [Video webcast]. Retrieved from http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability.html

Bruck, C. S., & Allen, T. D. (2003, December). The relationship between big five personality traits, negative affectivity, type A behavior, and work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *63*(3), 457–472. doi:10.1016/s0001-8791(02)00040-4

Bryman, A. (2004). Qualitative research on leadership: A critical but appreciative review. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *15*(6), 729–769. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.09.007

Bryman, A., Stephens, M., & à Campo, C. (1996). The importance of context: Qualitative research and the study of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 7*(3), 353–370. doi: 10.1016/s1048-9843(96)90025-9

Bunker, K. A. (1997). The power of vulnerability in contemporary leadership. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, *49*(2), 122–136. doi: 10.1037/1061-4087.49.2.122

Burns, A. C., Williams, L. A., & Maxham, J., III, (2000). Narrative text biases attending the critical incidents technique. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, 3*(4), 178-186. doi:10.1108/13522750010349279

Butterfield, L. D., Borgen, W. A., Amundson, N. E., & Maglio, A. S. T. (2005). Fifty years of the critical incident technique: 1954–2004 and beyond. *Qualitative Research*, *5*(4), 475–497. doi: 10.1177/1468794105056924

Chell, E. (1998). Critical incident technique. In G. Symon & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative methods and analysis in organizational research*: *A practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chell, E. (2004). Critical incident technique. In C. Cassell & G. Symon (Eds.), *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (pp. 45–60). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Chen, C. C., & Meindl, J. R. (1991). The construction of leadership images in the popular press: The case of Donald Burr and People Express. *Administrative Sciences Quarterly, 36*(4), 521–551. doi: 10.2307/2393273

Clarke, N. (2009). Projects are emotional: How project managers' emotional awareness can influence decisions and behaviors in projects. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business, 3*(4), 604–624. doi:10.1108/17538371011076073

Conger, J. A. (1998). Qualitative research as the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 9*(1), 107–121.

Conger, J. A., & Kanungo, R. N. (1987). Toward a behavioral theory of charismatic leadership in organizational settings. *Academy of Management Review*, *12*(4), 637–647. doi: 10.2307/258069

Cooper, C. (1984). Executive stress: A ten country comparison. *Human Resource Management*, *23*(4), 395–407. doi: 10.1002/hrm.3930230406

Courage (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster Online.* Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/courage.

Crabtree, B. F., & Miller, W. L. (1999). Using codes and code manuals: A template organizing style of interpretation. *Doing qualitative research*, *2*, 163–177.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cure, L. K. (2009). *Fear within the workplace: A phenomenological investigation of the experience of female leaders* (Unpublished dissertation). Capella University, Minneapolis, MN.

Danna, K., & Griffin, R. W. (1999). Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of literature. *Journal of Management*, *25*(3), 357–384. doi: 10.1177/014920639902500305

Darwin, C. (2002). *The expression of the emotions in man and animals*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dasborough, M. T. (2006, April). Cognitive asymmetry in employee emotional reactions to leadership behaviors. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *17*(2), 163–178. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.12.004

Debiec, J., & LeDoux, J. (2004). Fear and the brain. *Social Research*, *71*(4), 807–818.

Delgado-García, J. B., & De La Fuente-Sabaté, J. M. (2010, May). How do CEO emotions matter? Impact of CEO affective traits on strategic and performance conformity in the Spanish banking industry. *Strategic Management Journal, 31*(5), 562–574. doi: 10.1002/smj.817

Delgado-García, J. B., De La Fuente-Sabaté, J. M., & De Quevedo-Puente, E. (2010, June). Too negative to take risks? The effect of the CEO's emotional traits on firm risk. *British Journal of Management, 21*(2), 313–326. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8551.2008.00625.x

de Ruyter, K., Kasper, H., & Wetzels, M. (1995). Internal service quality in a manufacturing firm: A review of critical encounters. *New Zealand Journal of Business, 17*(2), 67–80.

Dillard, J. P., & Anderson, J. W. (2004, November). The role of fear in persuasion. *Psychology and Marketing*, *21*(11), 909–926. doi: 10.1002/mar.20041

Duncan, R. B. (1972). Characteristics of organizational environments and perceived environmental uncertainty. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *17*(3), 313–327.

Edvardsson, B. (1992). Service breakdowns: A study of critical incidents in an airline. *International Journal of Service Industry Management, 3*(4), 17–29. doi: 10.1108/09564239210019450

Eilber, L. R. (1953). A study of the emotional immaturity utilizing the critical incident technique. *University of Pittsburgh Bulletin, 49*, 199–204.

Eisenberg, N. (2000). Emotion, regulation, and moral development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *51*, 665–697. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.51.1.665

Ekman, P. (1992). An argument for basic emotions. *Cognition and Emotion, 6*, 169–200. doi: 10.1080/02699939208411068

Ellsberg, D. (1961). Risk, ambiguity, and the Savage axioms. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *75*(4), 643–669. doi: 10.2307/1884324

Erickson, R. J., & Wharton, A. S. (1997). Inauthenticity and depression assessing the consequences of interactive service work. *Work and Occupations*, *24*(2), 188–213. doi: 10.1177/0730888497024002004

Fehr, B., & Russell, J. A. (1984). Concept of emotion viewed from a prototype perspective. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *113*(3), 464–486. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.60.3.425

Fields, J. (2011). *Uncertainty: Turning fear and doubt into fuel for brilliance*. New York, NY: Penguin.

Fineman, S. (Ed.). (2000). *Emotion in organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fingeld, D. L. (1999). Courage as a process of pushing beyond the struggle. *Qualitative Health Research*, *9*(6), 803–814. doi: 10.1177/104973299129122298

Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin*, *51*(4), 327–358. doi: 10.1037/h0061470

Flanagan, J. C. (1982). Measurement of quality of life: Current state of the art. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, *63*(2), 56–59.

Freeston, M. H., Rheaume, J., Letarte, H., & Dugas, M. (1994). Why do people worry? *Personality and Individual Differences*, *17*(6), 791–802. doi: 10.1016/0191-8869(94)90048-5

Frijda, N. (1993). Moods, emotion episodes, and emotions. In M. Lewis & J. M. Haviland (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp.381–404). New York, NY: Guildford Press.

Frijda, N. (1994). Emotions are functional most of the time. In P. Ekman & R. Davidson (Eds.), *The nature of emotion* (pp. 112–122). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, W. L., Fischer, D., & Hunt, J. G. (2009). Emotional labor and leadership: A threat to authenticity? *The Leadership Quarterly, 20*, 466–482. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.03.011

George, J. M. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *Human Relations* , *53*, 1027–1055. doi:10.1177/0018726700538001

Glasø, L., & Einarsen, S. (2008) Emotion regulation in leader-follower relationship. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *13*(4), 482–500. doi:10.1080/13594320801994960

Goleman, D. (1998, Autumn/Fall). The emotional intelligence of leaders. *Leader to Leader*, *1998*(10), 20–26. doi:10.1002/ltl.40619981008

Gooty, J., Gavin, M., & Ashkanasy, N. M. (2009). Emotions research in OB: The challenges that lie ahead. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 30*(6), 833–838. doi: 10.1002/job.619

Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotion regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 5(1)*, 95–110. doi:10.1037/1076-8998.5.1.95

Grandey, A. A. (2003). When “the show must go on”: Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. *Academy of Management Journal*, *46*(1), 86–96. doi:10.2307/30040678

Gray, J. A. (1987). *The psychology of fear and stress*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gray, J. A. (1991). *The psychology of fear and stress*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative view. *Review of General Psychology*, *2*(3), 271–299. doi: 10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271

Gross, J. J., & Levenson, R. W. (1997). Hiding feelings: The acute effects of inhibiting negative and positive emotion. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *106*(1), 95–103. doi: 10.1037/0021-843x.106.1.95

Gross, J. J., & Muñoz, R. F. (1995). Emotion regulation and mental health. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, *2*(2), 151–164. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2850.1995.tb00036.x

Gross, J. J., & Thompson, R. A. (2007). Emotion regulation: Conceptual foundations. *Handbook of Emotion Regulation*, 3–24.

Grove, S. J., & Fisk, R. P. (1997). The impact of other customers on service experiences: A critical incident examination of "getting along." *Journal of Retailing, 73*(1), 63–85. doi:10.1016/s0022-4359(97)90015-4

Guralnik, D. B., & Charlton Grant, L. (1979). *Webster's new world dictionary of the American language*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Hambrick, D. C., Finkelstein, S., & Mooney, A. C. (2005). Executive job demands: New insights for explaining strategic decisions and leader behaviors. *Academy of Management Review*, *30*(3), 472–491. doi:10.5465/amr.2005.17293355

Hampton, T. J., (2013). *Know fear: How leaders respond and relate to their fears* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://ir.stthomas.edu/caps_ed_orgdev_docdiss/21

Hannah, S. T., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., & Harms, P. D. (2008). Leadership efficacy: Review and future directions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *19*(6), 669–692. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.09.007

Hannah, S. T., & Luthans, F. (2008). A cognitive affective processing explanation of positive leadership: Toward theoretical understanding of the role of psychological capital. In L. L. Neider & C. A. Schriesheim (Series Eds.) & R. H. Humphrey (Ed.), *Research in management* (Vol. 7) (pp. 17–39). New York, NY: Information Age.

Hannah, S. T., Sweeney, P. J., & Lester, P. B. (2007). Toward a courageous mindset: The subjective act and experience of courage. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *2*(2), 129–135. doi:10.1080/17439760701228854

Hannah, S. T., Uhl-Bien, M., Avolio, B. J., & Cavarretta, F. L. (2009). A framework for examining leadership in extreme contexts. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *20*(6), 897–919. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.09.006

Hartley, C. A., & Phelps, E. A. (2010). Changing fear: The neurocircuitry of emotion regulation. *Neuropsychopharmacology*, *35*(1), 136–146. doi:10.1038/npp.2009.121

Heifetz, R. A. (1994). Leadership without easy answers. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Heifetz, R. A., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009, July-August) Leadership in a (permanent) crisis. *Harvard Business Review*, 87(7/8), 62–69.

Heifetz, R.A., & Linsky, M. (2002) *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leading.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Herzberg, F., Mausner , B., & Snyderman, B. (1959). *The motivation to work*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Hofmann, S. G., Sawyer, A. T., Witt, A. A., & Oh, D. (2010). The effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *78*(2), 169–183. doi:10.1037/a0018555

Hopkinson, G., & Hogarth-Scott, S. (2001). What happened was…" Broadening the agenda for storied research. *Journal of Marketing Management, 17*(1–2), 27–47. doi: 10.1362/0267257012571483

Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelly, H. H. (1953). *Communication and persuasion: Psychological studies of opinion change*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Huddy, L. (2004). Contrasting theoretical approaches to intergroup relations. *Political Psychology*, *25*(6), 947–967. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00404.x

Humphrey, R. H., Pollack, J. M., & Hawver, T. (2008). Leading with emotional labor. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *23*(2), 151–168. doi:10.1108/02683940810850790

Izard, C. (1977). *Human emotions*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.

Izard, C.E. (1991). *The psychology of emotions*. New York, NY: Plenum.

Izard, C. E. (1992, July). Basic emotions, relations among emotions, and emotion-cognition relations. *Psychological Review*, *99*(3), 561–565. doi: 10.1037/0033-295x.99.3.561

Izard, C. E. (1993). Four systems for emotion activation: Cognitive and non-cognitive processes. *Psychological Review*, *100*, 68–90. doi: 10.1037/0033-295x.100.1.68

Jackman, J. M., & Strober, M. H. (2003). Fear of feedback. *Harvard Business Review*, *81*(4), 101–108.

Janis, I. L. (1967). Effects of fear arousal on attitude change: Recent developments in theory and experimental research. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *3*, 166–224. doi:10.1016/s0065-2601(08)60344-5

Jarvis, P. (1999). *The practitioner-researcher. Developing theory from practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Johansen, R. (2012). Leaders make the future: Ten new leadership skills for an uncertain world. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Judge, T. A., Piccolo, R. F., & Kosalka, T. (2009). The bright and dark sides of leader traits: A review and theoretical extension of the leader trait paradigm. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *20*, 855–875. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.09.004

Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kim, K. S. (2008). Effects of emotion control and task on web searching behavior. *Information Processing & Management*, *44*(1), 373–385. doi:10.1016/j.ipm.2006.11.008

Kramer, M. W., & Hess, J. A. (2002). Communication rules for the display of emotions in organizational settings. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *16*(1), 66–80. doi: 10.1177/0893318902161003

Larsen, R. J., & Ketelaar, T. (1991). Personality and susceptibility to positive and negative emotional states. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *61*(1), 132–140. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.61.1.132

Larsen, S., Øgaard, T., & Marnburg, E. (2005). Worries in restaurant managers. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology, 46*(1), 91–96. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9450.2005.00439.x

Lazarus, R. S. (1991). *Emotion and adaptation*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lazarus, R. S. (2006). *Stress and emotion: A new synthesis*. New York, NY: Springer.

LeadershipNow. (n.d.). *Theodore Roosevelt's Citizenship in a Republic: The Man in the Arena.* Retrieved from http://www.leadershipnow.com/tr-citizenship.html

LeDoux, J. (1996). *The emotional brain. The mysterious underpinnings of emotional life*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

LeDoux, J. (2012, January 22). Searching the brain for the roots of fear. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/01/22/anatomy-of-fear/

LeDoux, J. E. (2014). Coming to terms with fear. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*(8), 2871–2878. doi:10.1073/pnas.1400335111

LeDoux, J. E. (2015). Feelings: What Are They & How Does the Brain Make Them? *Daedalus*, *144*(1), 96–111. doi:10.1162/daed_a_00319

Lerner, J. S., & Keltner, D. (2000). Beyond valence: Toward a model of emotion-specific influences on judgment and choice. *Cognition and Emotion*, *14*(4), 473–493. doi: 10.1080/026999300402763

Lerner, J. S., & Keltner, D. (2001). Fear, anger and risk. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 81*(1), 146–159. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.81.1.146

Lerner, J. S., Gonzalez, R. M., Small, D. A., & Fischhoff, B. (2003). Effects of fear and anger on perceived risks of terrorism: A national field experiment. *Psychological Science, 14*(2), 144–150. doi: 10.1111/1467-9280.01433

Lerner, J. S., Small, D. A., & Loewenstein, G. (2004). Heart strings and purse strings: Carry-over effects of emotions on economic decisions. *Psychological Science, 15*(5), 337–341. doi: 10.1111/j.0956-7976.2004.00679.x

Lester, P. B., Vogelgesang, G. R., Hannah, S. T., & Kimmey, Jr., T. (2010). Developing courage in followers: Theoretical and applied perspectives. In C. L. S. Pury & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *The psychology of courage: Modern research on an ancient virtue*, (pp. 187–207). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Leventhal, H. (1970). Findings and theory in the study of fear communications. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, *5*, 119–186. doi: 10.1016/s0065-2601(08)60091-x

Li, Y., Ashkanasy, N. M., & Ahlstrom, D. (2010). Complexity theory and affect structure: A dynamic approach to modeling emotional changes in organizations. *Research on Emotion in Organizations*, *6*, 139–165. doi:10.1108/s1746-9791(2010)0000006010

Little, L. M., Simmons, B. L., & Nelson, D. L. (2007). Health among leaders: Positive and negative affect, engagement and burnout, forgiveness and revenge. *Journal of Management Studies, 44*(2), 243–260. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00687.x

Lord, R. G., Brown, D. J., Harvey, J. L., & Hall, R. J. (2001). Contextual constraints on prototype generation and their multilevel consequences for leadership perceptions. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *12*(3), 311–338. doi:10.1016/s1048-9843(01)00081-9

Luthans, F., Youssef, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2007). *Psychological capital: Developing the human competitive edge*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Maddi, S. R. (2006). Hardiness: The courage to grow from stresses. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *1*(3), 160–168. doi:10.1080/17439760600619609

Maddi, S. R., & Kobasa, S. C. (1984). *The hardy executive: Health under stress*. Homewood, IL: Dow-Jones Irwin.

Masten, A. S., & Reed, M. G. J. (2002). Resilience in development. In C. R. Snyder & S. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 74–88). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Matsumoto, D. (1989). Cultural influences on the perception of emotion. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *20*(1), 92–105. doi:10.1177/0022022189201006

Maxwell, J. A. (1992). Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review, 62*(3), 379–301.

Mayer, J. D., & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence? In P. Salovey & D. Sluyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Implications for educators* (pp. 3–31). New York, NY: Basic Books.

McClelland, D. C. (1998). Identifying competencies with behavioral-event interviews. *Psychological Science, 9*(5), 331–339. doi: 10.1111/1467-9280.00065

McGuire, W. J. (1968). Personality and susceptibility to social influence. In E. Borgatta &W. Lambert (Eds.), *Handbook of personality theory and research* (pp. 1130–1187). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

McGuire, W. J. (1969). The nature of attitudes and attitude change. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 3) (pp. 136–314). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Michel, S. (2001). Analyzing service failures and recoveries: A process approach. *International Journal of Service Industry Management, 12*(1), 20–33. doi: 10.1108/09564230110382754

Mischel, W., & Shoda, Y. (1998). Reconciling processing dynamics and personality dispositions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 49, 229–258. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.229

Morrison, K. (2010). Complexity theory, school leadership and management: Questions for theory and practice. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *38*(3), 374–393. doi:10.1177/1741143209359711

Neuhaus, P. (1996). Critical incidents in internal customer-supplier relationships: Results of an empirical study. In T. A. Swartz, D. E. Bowen, & S. W. Brown (Eds.), *Advances in services marketing and management research and practice* (pp. 283–313). London, England: JAI Press.

Northouse, P. G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

O'Byrne, K. K., Lopez, S. J., & Petersen, S. (2000, August). *Building a theory of courage: A precursor to change*. Paper presented at the 108th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

O'Connor, E. (2006). Leadership and emotions: An exploratory study into the emotional dimension of the role of the post-primary school principal in Ireland. *Reflective Practice: International and Multidisciplinary Perspectives, 7*(1), 46–59.

Öhman, A. (1986). Face the beast and fear the face: Animal and social fears as prototypes for evolutionary analyses of emotion. *Psychophysiology*, *23*(2), 123–145. doi:10.1111/j.1469-8986.1986.tb00608.x

Öhman, A. (2008). Fear and anxiety. *Handbook of Emotions*, 709–729.

Olsen, M. J. S., & Thomasson , B. (1992, June). *Qualitative methods in service quality research: An illustration of the critical incident technique and phenomenography*. Paper presented at the QUIS3 Conference, Karlstad, Sweden.

Osborn, R. N., Hunt, J. G., & Jauch, L. R. (2002). Toward a contextual theory of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *13*(6), 797–837. doi:10.1016/s1048-9843(02)00154-6

Ospina, S. (2004). Qualitative research. In G. Goethals, G. Sorensen, & J. McGregor (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of leadership,* London, England: Sage. Retrieved from http://ualr.edu/ma/list/uploads/2010/03/Qualitative_Research.pdf

Patton, M. Q. (2005). Qualitative research. *Encyclopedia of Statistics in Behavioral Science*. doi: 0.1002/0470013192.bsa514

Payne, R. L., & Cooper, C. L. (Eds.). (2003). *Emotions at work: Theory, research and applications for management*. Walden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

Pescosolido, A. T. (2002). Emergent leaders as managers of group emotion. *The Leadership Quarterly, 13*(5), 583–599. doi:10.1016/s1048-9843(02)00145-5

Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. (1999). *The knowing-doing gap: How smart companies turn knowledge into action*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Pink, D. H. (2009). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

Plutchik, R. (1991). *The emotions*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Polit, D. E., & Hungler, B. P. (1995). Evaluating research reports. *Nursing research principles and methods*. Philadelphia, PA: JB Lippincott.

Porter, L. W., & McLaughlin, G. B. (2006). Leadership and the organizational context: Like the weather? *The Leadership Quarterly*, *17*(6), 559–576. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2006.10.002

Pury, C. L. S., Kowalski, R. M., & Spearman, J. (2007). Distinctions between general and personal courage. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *2*(2), 99–114. doi: 10.1080/17439760701237962

Pury, C. L. S., & Starkey, C. B. (2010). Is courage an accolade or a process? A fundamental question for courage research. In C. L. S. Pury & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *The psychology of courage: Modern research on an ancient virtue* (pp. 67–87). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi: 10.1037/12168-000

Putman, D. (2004). *Psychological courage*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Putman, D. (2010). Philosophical roots of the concept of courage. In C. L. S. Puryv& S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *The psychology of courage: Modern research on an ancient virtue* (p. 9–22). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:10.1037/12168-001

Pyszczynski, T. (2004). What are we so afraid of? A terror management theory perspective on the politics of fear. *Social Research*, *71*(4), 827–848. doi: 10.1207/s15327965pli0801_1

Rachman, S. J. (1984). Fear and courage. *Behavior Therapy, 15*, 109–120. doi: 10.1016/S0005-7894(84)80045-3.

Rachman, S. J. (1990). *Fear and courage*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.

Rate, C., Clarke, J., Lindsay, D., & Sternberg, R. (2007). Implicit theories of courage. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, *2*, 80–98. doi:10.1080/17439760701228755

Rauch, F. A. (1841). *Psychology, or a view of the human soul, including anthropology*. New York, NY: M. W. Dodd.

Read, C. (2009). *The fear factor: What happens when fear grips Wall Street*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Reiss, S. (1987). Theoretical perspectives on the fear of anxiety. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *7*(6), 585–596.

Reiss, S. (1991). Expectancy model of fear, anxiety, and panic. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *11*(2), 141–153.

Riso, D. R., & Hudson, R. (1996). *Personality types: Using the Enneagram for self-discovery*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Riso, D. R., & Hudson, R. (1999). *The wisdom of the enneagram*. London, England: Bantam Books.

Robinson, M. D., & Clore, G. L. (2002a). Belief and feeling: Evidence for an accessibility model of emotional self-report. *Psychological Bulletin*, *128*(6), 934–960.

doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.128.6.934

Robinson, M. D., & Clore, G. L. (2002b). Episodic and semantic knowledge in emotional self-report: Evidence for two judgment processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *83*(1), 198–215. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.83.1.198

Rogers, R. W. (1975). A protection motivation theory of fear appeals and attitude change. *The Journal of Psychology: Interdisciplinary and Applied*, *91*(1), 93–114. doi: 10.1080/00223980.1975.9915803

Rogers, R. W. (1983). Cognitive and psychological processes in fear appeals and attitude change: A revised theory of protection motivation. In J. Cacioppo & R. Petty (Eds.), *Social Psychophysiology* (pp. 153-176). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Rosen, J. B., & Schulkin, J. (1998). From normal fear to pathological anxiety. *Psychological Review*, *105*(2), 325–350. doi: 10.1037/0033-295x.105.2.325

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied, 80*(1), 1–28. doi: 10.1037/h0092976

Rubin, R. S., Munz, D. C., & Bommer, W. H. (2005). Leading from within: The effects of emotion recognition and personality on transformational leadership behavior. *Academy of Management Journal*, *48*(5), 845–858. doi:10.5465/amj.2005.18803926

Russell, J. A. (1994). Is there universal recognition of emotion from facial expressions? A review of the cross-cultural studies. *Psychological Bulletin*, *115*(1), 102–141. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.115.1.102

Ryan, G., Emmerling, R. J., & Spencer, L. M. (2009). Distinguishing high-performing European executives: The role of emotional, social and cognitive competencies. *Journal of Management Development, 28*(9), 859–875. doi: 10.1108/02621710910987692

Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D. (1990). Emotional intelligence. *Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, *9*(3), 185–211. doi: 10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG

Sartre, J. P. (1957). *Existentialism and human emotions*. New York, NY: Kensington.

Schaubroeck, J., & Jones, J. R. (2000). Antecedents of workplace emotional labor dimensions and moderators of their effects on physical symptoms. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *21*(2), 163–183. doi: 10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(200003)21:2<163::AID-JOB37>3.0.CO;2-L

Searles, K. (2010). *Are fear, anxiety and worry interchangeable? I feel (afraid, anxious, worried) and I'm not going to take anymore*. Paper presented at the Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California.

Sinclair, A. (2007). *Leadership for the disillusioned: Moving beyond myths and heroes to leading that liberates.* Crows Nest, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Snyder, C. R., Rand, K. L., & Sigmon, D. R. (2002). Hope theory: A member of the positive psychology family. In C. R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 257–276). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Solomon, R. C. (2003). *What is an emotion? Classic and contemporary readings* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Staw, B. M., & Barsade, S. G. (1993). Affect and managerial performance: A test of the sadder-but-wiser vs. happier-and-smarter hypotheses. *Administration Science Quarterly*, *38*, 304–331. doi: 10.2307/2393415

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1995). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In Y. Lincoln & N. Denzin (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273–285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sutherland, V. J., & Cooper, C. L. (1995). Chief executive lifestyle stress. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 16*(7), 18. doi: 10.1108/01437739510100919

Szagun, G. (1992). Age-related changes in children's understanding of courage. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, *153*, 405–420. doi: 10.1080/00221325.1992.10753736

Turner, J., & Mavin, S. (2008). What can we learn from senior leader narratives? The strutting and fretting of becoming a leader. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *29*(4), 376–391. doi:10.1108/01437730810876168

Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., & McKelvey, B. (2007). Complexity leadership theory: Shifting leadership from the industrial age to the knowledge era. *The Leadership Quarterly, 18*(4), 298–318. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.04.002

Vail, P. (1996). *Learning as a way of being*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Walker, S., & Truly, E. (1992). The critical incidents technique: Philosophical foundations and methodological implications. *Marketing Theory and Applications, 3*, 270–275.

Walton, D. N. (1986). *Courage: A philosophical investigation.* Berkley: University of California Press.

Watson, D., & Friend, R. (1969). Measurement of social-evaluative anxiety. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *33*(4), 448. doi: 10.1037/h0027806

Weiss, H. M., & Beal, D. J. (2005). Reflections on affective events theory. *Emerald Journal*, *1*, 1–21. doi: 10.1016/S1746-9791(05)01101-6

Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews* (Vol. 18) (pp. 1–74). London, England: Elsevier Science/JAI Press.

Williams, H. W. (2008). Characteristics that distinguish outstanding urban principals: Emotional intelligence, social intelligence and environmental adaptation. *Journal of Management Development, 27*(1), 36–54. doi: 10.1108/02621710810840758

Williams, S., & Voon, Y. W. W. (1999). The effects of mood on managerial risk perceptions: Exploring affect and the dimensions of risk. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 139*(3), 268–287. doi: 10.1080/00224549909598384

Williams, S., Zainuba, M., & Jackson, R. (2003). Affective influences on risk perceptions and risk intention. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 18*(2), 126–137. doi: 10.1108/02683940310465027

Witte, K. (1992). Putting the fear back into fear appeals: The extended parallel process model. *Communication Monographs*, *59*(4), 329–349. doi: 10.1080/03637759209376276

Witte, K. (1994). Fear control and danger control: A test of the Extended Parallel Process Mode (EPPM). *Communications Monographs*, *61*, 113–134. doi: 10.1080/03637759409376328

Witte, K. (1998). Fear as motivator, fear as inhibitor: Using the EPPM to explain fear appeal successes and failures. In P. A. Anderson & L. K. Guerrero (Eds.), *The handbook of communication and emotion* (pp. 423–450). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Witte, K., & Allen, W. (2000). A meta-analysis of fear appeals: Implications for effective public health campaigns. *Health Education and Behavior*, *27*(5), 591–615. doi:10.1177/109019810002700506Wood, R., & Bandura, A. (1989a). Impact of conceptions of ability on self-regulatory mechanisms and complex decision-making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *56*(3), 407–415. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.56.3.407